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The Parent
and Teacher
for the Pupil.



L. Whitney Elkins

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THE
PARENT AND TEACHER
FOR THE PUPIL

BY

✓
L WHITNEY ELKINS.



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JACKSON, N. H.
L. W. ELKINS.

1896

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1896.

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TO
THE CLASS OF '95,
E. B. H. S.,
I respectfully dedicate
this little book.



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PREFACE.

THIS little book is designed to help the country girls and boys of Maine. It is written in two parts—the first seeking to enlist the united efforts of parents and school-officers towards a more universal development of true men and women, and worthy, self-sustaining citizenship; the second consisting of talks with scholars themselves. There is a chapter addressed to parents, one to teachers, etc.; but throughout the work are features which it is hoped will help parents, teachers, and all who are interested in the welfare of children; nor is there any good reason why the whole may not be read by young people.

The greater part has been written during the hours and half-hours that were not occupied in doing school-work. Briefness and simplicity of language have been studied most of all. The text of the first part is not closely connected because such a plan would have necessitated the employment of more words. The idea has been to get as much as seemed practicable into a small space, so that the busy parent can get time to read the work. Only common every-day subjects have been treated, and those in words plain and to the point. Though more might have been said concerning each topic, yet it is hoped that no especially valuable feature has been withheld from the book. In fact, the

only excuse for presenting it in these days of literary over-production is the desire that, in some small way, it may supply a real want in the lives of those whom it is designed to help.

It is no exaggeration of the truth to state that all the different parts of the work are based upon experience and facts learned through observation, or are founded on that natural intuition, resident in all of us, which we need never fear to trust, even if we cannot fully comprehend it. Some of the ideas advanced are not original with the author; for instance, the method of reading as described on page 25, was impressed on the mind of the writer when he was a school-boy by one of his teachers; and since he has known the plan to be recommended by others.

Regarding this little undertaking, I can only ask the kind reader to apply Carlyle's celebrated maxim, and try to see its good qualities before pronouncing upon its bad ones; and if these few written pages shall be the means of helping parents and teachers to appreciate each other more, and of directing youthful minds to higher ideals, I shall receive a sufficient reward.

L. W. E.

East Boothbay, Me., Feb. 8th, 1896.



INTRODUCTION.

Ill fares the land, to hastening ills a prey,
When wealth accumulates and men decay;
Princes and lords may flourish and may fade,
A breath can make them as a breath has made,
But an honest peasantry, a country's pride,
When once destroyed, can never be supplied.

Goldsmith.

OURS is a country progressive and vast. Its past history reads as a story, surpassing the careers of all the nations that have lived before it. After severe struggles, sometimes amid great discouragements, it has unfurled and developed with astonishing rapidity. Where the unbroken wilderness was great cities now stand, and flourishing villages, prosperous hamlets and fertile farms fill the gaps between them. Our centers of industry are connected by numerous railroads, and thousands of vessels sail on our lakes and rivers. Our sturdy democratic growth has no parallel in history. Evidences of thrift and intelligence are seen on every hand. Resources seem almost limitless. The courageous little republic of a hundred years ago has become a mighty power in the family of nations. Its wealth and influence are recognized throughout the civilized world.

Of all this we are justly proud; it proclaims the industrious character of our citizens. Day after day, year after year, we see people of every honest occupa-

tion peacefully and hopefully living on, profiting from the opportunities coming within their grasp, gathering what they may from the abundance which an Infinite Intelligence has given them.

But of greater importance than the lands we have possessed, the factories we have builded, or the money we have accumulated are the millions of children within our country. We have no greater concern than their promotion; for upon them will soon devolve not only the care of themselves and theirs, but the stability of the nation builded by our forefathers and thus far sustained by ourselves.

In the advancement of the century education has held its own. Indeed, it may be said our development is largely the outgrowth of education, for it seems the corner stone upon which has been based all future discovery, elegance and discourse; and more than that, it has been one of the prime agents that have enabled us — so great a multitude — to do so happily, and govern ourselves so successfully.

We have always taken an interest in schools, and it is well. And now it is our duty to keep informed regarding their work and their needs, so that we may provide for them at better advantage. As inventions and ways of business are constantly changing, so with education. Time was when scholars carrying to school their meagre supply of books, were given over to teachers who were required merely to govern, and assist in the more difficult portions of school work. Later, teachers by means of better methods sought to impart a greater proficiency and a clearer understanding of the subjects taught. Ideas of gradation crept in, until

by degrees definite courses were established. For many years mental development was the one thing sought, but that, too, has gradually changed.

All who have studied the matter admit that education is in a transitional period. The whole system from commencement of primary grade to completion of university course is being made the object of most careful and critical scrutiny. What is the best education?—what are the best methods? are timely queries to which no sensible person would venture to give specific answers. But during the past few years in a general way, educators have formulated replies somewhat as follows: The best education tends to give the child a symmetrical blending of physical, mental and spiritual strength; stimulates the moral growth; seeks not to cram the head with the sense and nonsense of books alone, but to call out the natural faculties; fosters observation, sound judgment, self-reliance, self-respect and self-control; learns the child to think and act; directs him so that through *self-culture* he may become a good citizen, useful to himself and the world;—and the methods which produce these results most naturally are the best.

“CHILDREN are heaven’s richest gift.” But how much depends on their training! As we see the happy little folks about us, do we often think of the possibilities of good or evil wrapped up within them?—do we realize the probabilities of their failure or success?

Teachers, as a rule, are eminently faithful to their trusts. No class of people are more interested in their

work; and considering the many uncertain features of their profession, no class of workers make fewer mistakes.

Nearly all parents, too, are solicitous concerning their children's welfare. They wish the young lives of their offspring to be full and happy, and provide for them all the advantages that circumstances will allow. Yet, after all, we fear that some people display greater foresight in their strictly pecuniary affairs than in the rearing of their little girls and boys. They provide schools and all their accessories, entrust their children to the teacher, and then too many, leaving matters to follow whatever course they will, do no more.

Here, as we shall attempt to show, is where one of the great weaknesses of present-day education steps in. Between parent and teacher there is need of a greater mutual co-operation. Perhaps neither fully realize the moment of some of the things they fail to do. Certainly they do not help each other—therefore the pupil—as much as they should. They are not well enough acquainted; their respective lines of work are drawn too far apart, and they have too little in common.

There are other facts of which parents should not be forgetful. Much, sometimes everything, depends upon the home life of the child. If all parents strove to guide their children in paths of usefulness, to fill them with the desire of future success, they would greatly reinforce the efforts of instructors, and become more than they now are, an economic factor in school work.

In the following pages let us try to understand each

other better, appreciate each other more, and consider how by working together we may advance the welfare of those in whom we are so deeply interested. Let us direct our thoughts toward a more perfect education.



THE PARENT AND TEACHER FOR THE PUPIL.

PART FIRST.

THE PARENT'S DUTY.

Turn, turn my wheel! What is begun
At daybreak must at dark be done,
Tomorrow will be another day
Tomorrow the hot furnace flame
Will search the heart and try the frame
And stamp with honor or with shame
These vessels made of clay.

Longfellow.

EVERY year millions of dollars are expended in one kind of education. As a business matter it should be used to the best advantage; for it is designed to be a help in the mature lives of those who are now young. There is another kind of education equally important, which should be conducted just as practically. We refer to the training given at home.

The uniform development of children — a term which should be considered synonymous with *education* — is our first and greatest duty. If well cared for, like new-born plants of the garden, children expand in strength and beauty; but they are easily perverted and dwarfed by neglect. Where left to themselves some few retain their strength; many droop like tender

flowers beneath the sun's scorching rays, to revive again; others, so far as real, true life is concerned, perish. Certainly, it is somebody's place to direct the young in ways of safety and usefulness, and this responsibility clearly rests upon the parent. Therefore, a careful consideration of the matter is of vital importance.

As parents, there are many who ought to think of this duty more than they do. Excepting school-teachers, perhaps no class of people can know how much the child's school-life depends upon the home-life; for in the home the first prominent traits of character assert themselves, and, whether they be good or bad, are taken into the school, and most likely from the school through after life. They appear and re-appear, until they become component parts of the person and have their full share of influence in deciding his station.

Such matters should receive early attention. No time is so favorable as youth to inculcate those great lessons that must be learned. Little people should grow up with the knowledge that they are living and working for themselves and are preparing for something. They should see a goal in the distance and worthy examples set before them. Thus children would get a better idea of their obligations, and begin to think in a small way of the probabilities, even the possibilities that may come within their reach. As a matter of course, with many, these early thoughts would, in time, deepen into a steady, determined enthusiasm; the tried and true men which the world so much needs would become more, the many hap-hazard,

aimless lives, less. Could good home training be given to all children, there would not be half as many shiftless, dependent persons without character or aught else to sustain them. Although it is unwise to choose a youth's occupation for him, yet he needs the parent's directing and controlling power along the lines he seems adapted to follow.

ALL parents should insist upon prompt and implicit obedience. Every command should be element and reasonable, and its performance the immediate purpose of the child. Thus, as children grow older, they become accustomed to do their duties readily and cheerfully—a habit of inestimable value in after life.

In no other way can the respect of boys and girls be retained so fully. When allowed to disobey, or to obey only after a parley, they are almost sure to lose respect for their superiors, and this is sometimes followed by disgust. And yet, as true and simple as these words may seem, comparatively few American children have thoroughly learned the priceless lesson of obedience and respect. Some day, early in life, the child's insubordination manifests itself. Instead of prudently controlling it, the hurried parent does not notice the matter, or thinks it rather amusing, and closing his eyes to the future, passes it by. Naturally this do-as-I-please habit grows stronger, until parents' wishes are disregarded, and the child has no true respect for others nor correct ideas of himself. In time such a child becomes the "smart" boy who knows not the manliness of a civil answer, or the "nice" girl who thinks nobody worthy of notice except herself.

This common fault is a reflection upon American sense for which parents are to blame. It is worth all it costs to impress obedience upon youthful minds. Children are happier for it. Use a little reason and they will quickly understand how they are learning a lesson useful to themselves.

ONE of the natural, lovable traits of a child is a pleasant, sympathetic disposition. Should there seem to be a deficiency in this, try by every means, dear parent, to cultivate the faculty, taking care not to spoil the child by over-indulgence. Very few children, if any, are entirely devoid of affection, but sometimes good dispositions are spoiled by continuous fault-finding. How different in its effects is a kindly, firm procedure on the part of the parent and a willing compliance on the part of the child! It is not pleasing to contemplate how many lovable dispositions have been hardened by indifference—perhaps at a tender age driven out into this world of temptation by parental scolds. If you wish to be respected by your children, beware of a fretful, fault-finding tongue.

It is essential and right that children should manifest a real respect for their parents and elders. It is essential and right that older people and parents should manifest a real respect for children. Who of us looking back to our childhood days, do not see characters that held high places in our esteem, because they used to take an interest in us, and tried to interest us as children? Did we ever show anything but respect for them? No, indeed!

On the other hand, a person of mature age cannot

lower his standing in the estimation of his youthful acquaintances more easily than by guying, or "fooling" with them. They are never certain as to his meaning, nor do they take him seriously. The person who makes a bantering remark to a boy is likely to get an uncivil rejoinder. Every grown person ought to respect children enough not to provoke them to rudeness.

As a father you would not like to have your boy rude at home, nor profane in your presence; nor would you consent to his filling your sitting-room with tobacco smoke. Now you must respect him so much that you will do none of these acts in his presence. How can you reasonably reprove his faults when he is merely following your example?

Again, as young people grow older and commence to accomplish works for themselves, remember they dislike to have the older folk of the family make their exploits and prospects (however flattering they may be) a theme for public gossip. Let us hope the coming country generation will exercise more discretion than the present one in news-telling. If you would keep in their good graces, you must respect your children, even your older sons and daughters. You *must* do it. You ought to do it. Many a youth has quit home and no doubt many more would like to do the same, because of its fault finding and rudeness and gossip. It is your duty to respect your children, and then they will be likely to respect you.

"GOD may forgive sins, but awkwardness has no forgiveness in heaven or earth."

These are the words of Hawthorne. Perhaps they

are too strong, but surely awkwardness has no good excuse. Every home ought to be a school in which young folks can learn good manners. Every parent should strive so far as possible to be a good example. Moreover, let children get accustomed to seeing people and talking with them; help them to the end of talking and acting judiciously; of being gentle and careful; give them such special instructions as they need; encourage them to do the best they can, and they will assume pleasing, unaffected manners.

An unconscious, graceful bearing comes only through instruction and experience. If little people do not receive this home training, parents need not be surprised at their not knowing how to appear when away from home. Whose fault that they are bashful, do not know what to do with themselves, and escape at the earliest opportunity? Children reflect their home life like a mirror.

When we come to think of it, it is easy to suppose this matter determines the future of many lives. Evidently those who are capable of associating with cultured people take courage to make the most of themselves and bend all their energies to the task; how many more or less brilliant youths find baser companions, because in early life they lacked this home instruction is impossible to conjecture.

Still it is surprising how many people fail to realize the moment of a becoming appearance. Not a long time ago the author was talking with a man who thought it "best to let them grow up as young ones always have." What do you think of it, parents? Would you prefer that *your* girls and boys become

agreeable ladies and gentlemen, or “grow up” frightened, uncouth rustics?

PARENTS should know where children go and how they behave when not at home. It is plainly apparent to all observing persons that childrens’ associations—especially those of boys—are none too good. About every school has some scholars coarse in manner and speech. The majority of ball games are master schools in which almost every boy, it sometimes seems, uses profanity. And so right on through life. Until people are more advanced in civilization this cannot be helped. Children must encounter immoral surroundings and temptations, which are so common that none of us can keep away from them. Perhaps it is unwise to attempt to do so. Better learn the boy to take a sturdy pride in his own manliness and trustworthiness strong enough to withstand and dispise all unworthy things.

Some young folks are prone to ill-behavior when not under parental restraint. Whenever the youthful part of the family are going to a public gathering or place of entertainment, it is well for some older member to accompany them. Thus they form the habit of appearing better, and perhaps, mingle with better associates. Besides, people have no right to turn loose their offspring on society.

The more out-of-door air and play children get, the better; but thoughtful fathers and mothers will not allow their boys and girls to stay away from home after dark. And yet, every evening, almost any village street has its crowd of active, shouting children.

There, instead of amid the refining influences of home, thousands of youths are forming their characters.

All of which is as needless as it is wrong, although it is very natural that the young want something to do. Let the home be more attractive. It need not be spacious, nor richly furnished; only let it have the cheerful and attractive charm which a mother or elder sister is capable of giving it. And withal, let there be some older inmates appreciative of youth. Then home will be more attractive than the street or store; then, indeed, it may become a source of delight and great gain.

Everything should reflect cosiness, order, and refinement. There should be some pleasant games about the house, some means of music, if it can be afforded, and by all means a supply of good books and papers. Part of the time may best be used in preparing to-morrow's lessons for school. Many of us now grown to a more mature estate remember most pleasantly the drill that father gave us from the old green-covered arithmetic, and the stories that mother afterwards read to us from the *Youth's Companion*.

When the safe skating and good coasting come, let the children enjoy the sport fully, for it can last but a little while at most, and they will appreciate the favor. And Friday evening after the week's work is over, let them know that their youthful acquaintances are always welcome in the home.

In home-life teach children to always be their own frank, honest, pleasant selves. In too many New England homes are assumed false appearances. Nobody is deceived by the work of a gilded brush.

Precocity should be discouraged. Parents not infrequently injure a child's health by rushing him into mental work too early, simply because he is able and willing to do.

Again, some people have a way of praising the exploits of their children, distinctly giving them the notion that they are "smart" children. Many a youth of promise has been spoiled in this foolish way. Some of the girls and boys of well-to-do parents are petted and fondled till they form entirely wrong impressions of themselves, seeming to think other people were created expressly for their benefit. When these disagreeable children come to school their conduct towards teacher and scholars seems to say: "You are here solely for my amusement. If you don't use me gently and let me do about as I wish, my father, who is a big man, will see about it."

Nor is it an exaggeration to say that this disposition often develops into a form of imbecility. Foolish, foolish parents, who do not realize that wealth may become a stumbling-block, or a pitfall to youth instead of a blessing. Every child, whether of wealthy family or poor, should be taught to consider himself on a social level with all others in his school. A sensible parent does his children a kindness when he impresses their minds with the fact that their present station is nothing, and all their success in future life will depend on their own efforts, perseverance and character.

DO not think because you give children little or nothing to do, that you are doing them a kindness. An idea of practical work strengthens self-

reliance and self-respect. Idleness begets all sorts of vice; often it transforms the good into the bad, the intelligent into the imbecile. It is not good for any boy to spend his money for tobacco and like things; nor to waste his time in country stores and on village street-corners, really unrespected by himself or others. He should have *something* to do.

Is not inconvenience the offspring of carelessness? What has been your experience? Ask yourself these questions, analyze your past trials, and answer candidly, without favor. Then you will think of the importance of implanting habits of industry, care and exactness in children. In conversation insist that they speak correctly and define occurrences accurately, instead of talking half at random as many children — and older people — do. Insist that whatever they commence shall be finished, and done well. See that they heed even the minutest details of the matter in hand, and that they despise not little things; for of such will their lives be composed. “Trifles make perfection, and perfection is no trifle,” remarked Michael Angelo, the sculptor. Anyone who is not careful and thorough, even concerning the so-called trifles, can hardly be successful.

Observation and thoughtfulness are among the prime factors of a happy life. Doubtless these qualities are inborn to a greater or less extent, but they are also acquired habits. Hence the necessity of nurturing these same qualities in boys and girls. Some people, seeing, perceive not, and hearing, comprehend not. If the youth does not notice things as quickly or as exactly as seems desirable, cultivate the habit for him;

get him interested; make him understand that aptness in observation is for his welfare, his convenience, his comfort of mind; that it helps acquaint him with the world and the practical affairs of men.

Encourage him to think as well. Obviously thought broadens the mind and helps the individual; it devises ways and means, suggests opportunities and how to improve them, and makes a ready youth.

Teach the young that there is something of interest and beauty in every object though it be only a little flower or an old wayside stone, and encourage them to seek out the good. If some little fault presents itself, let not that spoil the whole. Some folks while looking at a beautiful waterfall, complain of an old mill standing on the river's bank; still there is more beauty before them than anyone can appreciate, thinking nothing about the mill. And the same mistake is liable to occur in our opinions of men. We do well to follow the old Chinese proverb: "Use men as you use wood; if one inch is rotten you do not throw away the whole piece." Few worldly works are just perfect, but many are sources of joy and profit when we value the good.

SPECIAL care needs to be taken with children in home reading. Encourage them to read juvenile papers and books at first, and when they get old enough to understand larger works, help them carry out Bacon's excellent advice: "Read not to contradict and confute, nor to believe and take for granted, nor to find talk and discourse; but to weigh and consider."
* * * Some books are to be read only in parts; others

to be read, but not curiously, and some few to be read wholly, and with diligence and attention."

Teach the youth, as he reads, to carry the represented scene—the picture—in his mind. The formation of the habit, so that every hill and meadow of which he reads shall pass before him is only a matter of training. Take Scott's "*Ivanhoe*" for instance, and every place and event from the dark old forest skirting the Don to the closing scene where Rebecca bids Rowena farewell, falls into a logical and permanent order, and as a result the book is understood and remembered better.

Take Whittier's "*In School Days.*" Let children think of the old dilapidated school-house beside the road, surrounded by sumachs and blackberry vines; help them see its window-panes lit by the setting sun, and the melted snow dropping from the eaves; the lingering child with golden curls and sorrowful eyes, and the little lad whom "her childish favor singled," as,

"Pushing with restless feet the snow
To right and left, he lingered.—
As restlessly her tiny hands
The blue-checked apron fingered."

Do this, and the youth will learn to think of the childish thoughts embodied in this tender little picture.

In the same way suppose we take Tennyson's "*Bugle Song:*"

"The splendor falls on castle walls,
And snowy summits old in story;
The long light shakes across the lakes,
And the wild cataract leaps in glory.
Blow, bugle, blow, set the wild echoes flying;
Blow, bugle, answer, echoes, dying, dying, dying!"

Help the youthful reader of this beautiful poem to imagine castle walls picturesque and old, and their romantic history; of lofty, distant snow-capped mountains; of the noise and beauty of misty cataracts, and the bright shafts of sunlight over all; among the hills, clear-toned bugle notes, rising, then falling in rhythmic cadence, echoing and re-echoing, dying away on the sides of distant mountains.

This is by no means an impossible nor hard task, even for those parents who do not pride themselves in education. Nearly every parent can do it, not perfectly, perhaps, but well enough to open children's eyes and awaken their minds so that they will acquire the habit for themselves. Not only is a greater interest taken in reading, but an entirely new love for literature is formed, and more delicate perceptions of feeling, sympathy and beauty. "Let parents see that the imagination of the young be flooded with fine, high thought, and they have done much toward making their offspring men and women of conscience and true nobility." *

LAST autumn the different ways to encourage children in silent reading were considered in a Maine teachers' convention. Someone intimated that girls and boys do not like to read—an intimation that is unjust to many youths. However we do not have to look far to discover the cause of what truth there is in the statement. It is not the teacher's place to inculcate the love of reading, but clearly the parent's duty. Yet there are many homes in Maine where music is,

* Editor Flower in *Arena*.

and many of the pleasures afforded the young, in which children are never asked or expected to open a book, much more to interest themselves in literature.

As a commencement, every household should have its library, composed of poems, stories, histories, and books of travel. The number of volumes need not be large. Ten or twelve would be enough to commence with, but whether twelve or twelve hundred, the selections should be a matter of careful thought. Individual tastes vary, so that it is impossible to make a list of works that would please every person. To those familiar with books, the making of proper selections can give no great difficulty. To those who have not considered the matter much, we would briefly suggest:

For young children there are several bright, full magazines and papers that abound with pleasant, moral child stories. Nothing can be found better adapted for early reading. Then there are numerous juvenile books on sale that are good; only be sure that the story is pure and childlike.

For youth the following are good: Miss Andrew's "*Seven Little Sisters*" and "*Ten Boys Who Lived on the Road from Long Ago till Now*;" Pratt's "*Stories of American History*" and "*The Fairy Land of Flowers*;" Hale's "*Ten Times One is Ten*;" Cooper's "*Last of the Mohicans*;" Miss Alcott's "*Little Women*" and "*Little Men*;" Mrs. Stowe's "*Uncle Tom's Cabin*," and Irving's "*Sketch Book*."

In poetry, as a commencement, Longfellow's "*The Children's Hour*," "*The Village Blacksmith*," "*The Day is Done*," "*The Architects*," "*The Bridge*," etc.; Whittier's "*In School Days*," "*Barefoot Boy*," etc.

Longfellow's "*Evangeline*," Whittier's "*Snow Bound*" and "*Maud Muller*;" Bryant's "*Thanatopsis*" and "*Forest Hymn*;" Lowell's "*Vision of Sir Launfal*," and Tennyson's "*Idyls of the King*" are beautiful masterpieces for those children to read who are old enough to understand and appreciate them.

Among historical works should be readable histories of Greece, Rome, Europe, England and our own United States; added to these, Irving's "*Life of George Washington*." Books of an historical nature, written in story form, are valuable in this connection; also narrations of combined travel and adventure are instructive, and to boys and girls present a peculiar charm.

Again, let us make a list of a very few of the best authors. In poetry, Longfellow, Whittier and Lowell may be recommended first, to be followed by Tennyson, Bryant and Shakespeare. In the story and novel line, Cooper, Scott (*Ivanhoe* first), Dickens, Irving, Hawthorne and Stephenson.

Among the more thoughtful works may be recommended Emerson, Bacon (*Essays*), and perhaps later on Carlyle (for the youth who can read the "*French Revolution*" and "*Sartor Resartus*"). John Ruskin, also, is one of the most helpful of all writers and can be read before Emerson or Bacon.

The foregoing, like all arbitrary lists, is unsatisfactory, and the mere beginning of what a more perfect one would have to be; but if followed out in whole, or, perhaps, only in part, it will form a taste for standard reading that may be trusted to make desirable selections afterwards.

Besides the library, which may be small — five books

are enough, and better than twenty-five for a youth to read in one year—there should be one or two good monthly magazines and a daily newspaper (perhaps a weekly journal of current events answers every purpose as well).

And now, dear parent, because the proper books and papers have been supplied, do you think it would be wise even to ask the children to read them? Rather give them the idea, as boys and girls who are anxious to get along in the world, and who wish to know as much as other boys and girls, that they are privileged to enter upon a profitable and thoroughly pleasant pastime. Be just as practical in this as in any other business affair. Now and then spend an hour—the hour you would waste somewhere else—in reading aloud to the young folks. Converse with them a few minutes about their books and stories, thus strengthening their acuteness and correcting their wrong impressions. Interest them in the passing events as recorded in the newspaper, so they may become well informed; and if you can, tell them where to find the meaning of facts and illusions which they do not understand.

In some homes this has become an established custom. Each child in good time begins to read and think because the older members of the family do the same. If this has not been the custom in your home, you should lose no time in adopting it. Carry out the plan outlined herein for a few weeks, and you can judge concerning it. Perhaps you will then better understand the capabilities of youth. *This discipline is intelligent and practical*, and you cannot afford to lessen your children's chances of success, as you will by

neglecting it. It widens the mind on practical lines. In the strict meaning of the word, the highest education obtainable—even the education of colleges and universities—is narrow, unless supplemented and supported by a broader knowledge of the world.

Whatever your politics and personal opinions are, you should teach your children to respect the President of the nation and others placed in positions of authority. It is always easier to criticise works than to accomplish them. So much disrespect and abuse toward public men as we have at present, does no credit to modern journalism nor people's good sense.

It would not be right to pass over this subject without saying more. Unfortunately it has other than its bright side.

In our day there is a literature of a kind, cheap and abundant,—stories of passion and murder and crime—that is wielding a mighty influence on youthful character. When there are so many good books in the world, to a person of sense it is disgusting and deplorable to see girls and boys reading exciting love novels and low-rate detective and brigandish stories. It is a shame that our country supports so many publications of a sensational and sensual stamp. All such stuff appeals to the baser side of human nature, and being utterly unfit for adults to read, it cannot be otherwise than harmful to youth.

Yet in how many homes is found this class of reading, and within reach of children. We should not harbor it in the home, to say nothing of occupying our time with it. There are numerous second-class authors of no small ability who are willing to write for good

pay; and there are enough publishing houses that will publish most anything for big sales; and there seems no way of getting rid of this kind of writing till our homes and schools turn out fewer second-class people, such as desire to read it.

Young people require the sort of reading calculated to broaden their minds, strengthen their purposes and ennoble their lives.

THERE are many sensitive people in this world of ours. All of us are acquainted with such persons, and know how liable they are to take offence without any intended provocation, and how careful we must be in all our relations with them. Every teacher knows the sensitive child at school, just as the parent knows him at home. No one, perhaps, is more entitled to a share of our sympathy. Few can imagine the misery of his easily wounded nature, nor recall the feeling of the hot tears that course down his cheeks. Sensitiveness is an inherited misfortune, very foolish, but also very real. Yet it is a misfortune which may be entirely remedied when taken in time. Parents and teachers should be ready for every occasion; first to soothe the child, to correct his mistaken mind, to encourage his self-dependence, and, it may be, to administer a gentle reproof. If this course is followed wisely, ere many days there will be a change; and if followed persistently this undesirable trait in the child will gradually disappear. To do less is a serious neglect of duty—almost a misdemeanor.

MANY children are *taught* to be inquisitive, and to attend to everybody's business. Here are extracts of colloquies from life, as nearly as the author can recall the words :

Father. Dick just went by. I don't believe he will get his work done this summer.

Mother. I shouldn't think he would; he's never at home.

F. Well, I calculate he'll get considerably disappointed, any how.

* * *

Mother. Did you mind, Joe, what Mr. Brown bought over at the store yesterday?

Joe. He got a lamp chimney, some paper and a bag of salt; and something else; I don't know what.

M. Wasn't you with Joe, Susie? Did you notice what it was?

Susie. I guess he bought a saw.

* * *

Father. Wonder what that man's name is that was over to Brown's yesterday?

Mother. I can't find out anyway: Mrs. Smith was here this morning and she hadn't found out either; and you know she knows everything that's going on. She said he's from Providence, though.

F. He's a pretty good looking fellow anyway. Shouldn't wonder at all if he's well-off. I heard he is going to have a pair of fancy horses up here to drive this summer.

[*Enter Tom from post office with his father's and Uncle John's mail.*]

Mother. Well, Tom, have you got any letters?

Tom. One for Uncle John.

M. Let me see it! (*Takes it and examines the address critically.*) I don't know who it can be from. I never saw that writing before. It came from Rutland.

Father. (*Extending his hand.*) Let me see it! (*Examines it.*) I'm sure I don't know who it's from. Here, Tom, take it right over to John; etc., etc., etc.

Possibly this little conversation seems a little too prominent when set apart by itself. However it is not an exaggerated sample of a kind of talk which is continually going on in thousands of New England country homes. It is the same today as yesterday, never affected by the pulse-waves of progress or retrogression. Always common-place and seldom instructive, it merely reflects an idle, vulgar curiosity which children quickly learn. It is well for Joe to be a bright boy who would naturally notice what Mr. Brown was buying at the store; for the father to inquire the name of Mr. Brown's new guest, or for the mother to read the postmark as she held the letter in her hand. Observation is useful in a thousand ways; but when it descends to the plane of idle inquisitiveness, its true use is belittled, and it then argues a lack of that sturdy sense, so necessary to the best manhood or womanhood.

No wonder there are peevish little children forever poking their meddlesome little noses into that which is no concern of theirs. The cause and remedy for the same are plainly apparent.

WHEN a father speaks profanely, is it surprising that his son should take up the habit? If the

mother is of a scolding, fretful turn of mind, is it strange that her children should develop ill-tempered, fault-finding dispositions? If parents are careless and indifferent, is it a wonder that their boys and girls should manifest the same traits? Certainly not; unless children get disgusted with such parents, and resolve to be unlike them, the result could hardly be otherwise.

On the other hand, is it remarkable that children of careful industrious, honest parents, should be careful, industrious and honest? By no means. Their birth and home-education tend to make them such. Generally the parents' character, whether coarse or refined, pleasant or sullen, gentle or untractable, can be read in the child. Children who are rude at home are apt to evince the same characteristic at school; while those well trained at home are likely to make the least trouble, and accomplish the most.

How many parents — how many thousands of parents — there are right here in our own state of Maine, who ought to be more careful of the example they set! Let every father and mother feel sure that they are not the means of some youth's going wrong in this world, where all might be so happy and good. Remember that through parental example the young are forming life-long habits; and the power of habit is strong.

“A LITTLE philosophy inclineth a man's mind to atheism, but depth of philosophy bringeth men's minds about to religion,” said Lord Bacon.

Whatever a parent's religious ideas may be, that parent does well in sending his children to church and

Sunday-school. Temptations are so strong and human nature so frail that prudence alone should prompt him to place his offspring in the warmth of every good influence. The associations and influences of Sunday services are most elevating and tend to the formation of sound moral character, and at the same time an opportunity of becoming better acquainted with the Bible — beautiful with its incomparable precepts for a highly-ordered life — is improved. Therefore, besides gaining a respect for the Supreme Power which every one ought to feel, there is acquired a practical knowledge of the Book, without which no person can claim to be well informed.

In short, here is a gateway through which one enters an avenue of valuable spiritual and secular knowledge. Nor in these days of progressive thought can any reasonable man argue that we stand in danger of embracing a too blind faith.

CAMPAIGN orators and the press are ever proclaiming the luxuries that we as a people enjoy; and in truth the American of the majority class does declare he will spend all he earns and get the good of it. As a result too many of our people are, in the real sense of the word, becoming extravagant, and if not living beyond their incomes, are failing to put aside a part of their yearly earnings against a time of need.

But more serious than this follows the fact that wrong ideas are being implanted in the minds of youth. Accustomed to possessing about all they desire, they learn to look upon these luxuries as indispensable, and even fail to appreciate them as such.

With no practical idea of the worth of money, they do not stop to distinguish between a dollar and a cent, or to realize the value of either. They simply rely trustingly upon their father's wealth, instead of standing somewhat upon their own judgment and inherent good sense.

At the next step, extravagance hits hard at the sturdiness of the youth's character. The boy with plenty of money is pretty apt to find spendthrift companions, and his associations with such a clique are not conducive to his physical, mental, or moral welfare. When he gets old enough, unless compelled to make some choice, more than likely he will hang closely to his family home and continue to spend his father's money, without enough self-respect or character to become a man on his own account. That thousands of such young men exist in our own New England villages—we are not thinking of cities—is admitted by every observant person.

The daughters in these lavish households are as often spoiled by parental over-indulgence. Of course all the kindnesses shown by the fond mother, and the gifts which the girl needs not and cannot appreciate, are all bestowed with the best intent. But intended kindness is sometimes most unkind. Could not mothers well impress their daughters' minds with the practical concerns of life more, and less with fickle and frivolous things? Could they not sometimes impart a greater consideration and respect for those who have had poorer advantages? Should not every girl be interested in some womanly pursuit which would give self-

reliance, and should ever circumstances demand it, the promise of a livelihood?

Should we attempt to enumerate all the evils of extravagance, they would form too long a list; but such as they are, they can be set right only when people get correct ideas concerning expenditures, and practice self-denial well enough to live up to them. Parents should imbed habits of economy deeply in the minds of their children. Before leaving this subject, let us present a plan suggested last summer in one of our leading magazines.

“While in this country we give to our school-children rewards of merit, a certificate, a medal or a book, the most frequent prize in French schools is a savings bank-book with a small sum to the credit of the prize winner. The result is, as recent statistics published in France show, that comfortable fortunes have been built upon these small bank accounts. In over seventy per cent. of the instances where the bank account was established for the pupil, the habit of thrift was inculcated and the accounts were continued; while only in thirty per cent. was the desire to add to the account lost. * * *

We ought to do this in America. Our children must be taught a different value of money than they at present have. And the beginning must be made by ceasing to keep up the nefarious practice of living up to our incomes. We must live this side of them. The French go on the theory that twenty-five per cent. of one's income must be saved. This is a good percentage. All of us can do this if we can only make up our minds to do it. And if our schools could only be

induced to copy the French idea of giving bank-books of small amounts to their scholars as rewards of merit, it would be infinitely better than the present system of giving books or medals. The American child must learn the lesson of saving. And the school-teacher can do much to impress this lesson." *

This system of prize giving is surely far superior to ours, and is worthy of adoption in our schools. But, dear parents, in this matter depend not too much upon teachers. We undoubtedly have our faults and frailties, just as you have yours, and we leave undone some of the things which we ought to do. Attend to this feature of children's education yourself. They are yours and the superintendence of their all-round development depends upon you.

PROBABLY on moral grounds many people no longer object to dancing when properly conducted. But after commending all its useful features, it must be admitted that dances do not make a favorable comparison with some of the discarded old-time amusements, as regards the development of men.

It is a pity that the wholesome old-fashioned lyceum had to give way to more frivolous innovations. The lyceum was a laudable institution, and in its day the means of much good. Through it young people learned to declaim, and to write short articles for the lyceum paper. They gave the best their advantages permitted in burlesque, tableaux and music. They read standard books, and all were allowed to take part in the debates

* Edward K. Bok, in *Ladies' Home Journal*, September, 1895.

in which "questions" were discussed with a thoroughness and earnestness that would fairly vanquish most of our present dapper, up-to-date men.

Just how far-reaching the lyceum was in its effects is difficult to say. It was a pastime that engendered thought and established confidence. From it many Maine boys who have since attained honored stations drew their first inspirations; of this number the Chief Justice of the United States Supreme Court is a noteworthy example. No doubt this mode of entertainment would seem tame to some of our profuse youngsters, who, in some respects, seem to differ from the staid youths of fifty years ago.

Yet if the lyceum could be re-established, it would arouse the ambitions, and reveal the merits of some boys and girls in such a manner as to prove itself a blessing throughout their subsequent lives. Very true, it might not be fashionable. Conventionalism counts its slaves by thousands and hundred-thousands. They are only slaves. Along some lines there ever has been, and, it is possible, ever will be, an unlikeness between good taste and fashion. However, a person of influence wishing to do his village or community a favor, could, perhaps, do no better than to institute an old-time lyceum. It has helped make men.

CHILDREN are the greatest gifts intrusted to mortal care, and their school-training is one of the most important parts of their entire education. Yet how many parents there are who, thinking their whole duty lies in supporting a system and electing men to stand at its head, send their children to teachers and schools of

which they know little, and never go to ascertain what their children are doing. Would any one of these parents entrust to a workman a work of far less importance and never see how it progresses? About some matters, some practical people are decidedly impractical. Nor is this statement a paradox.

It would add greatly to the proficiency of our schools if the teacher and parent knew more of each other. Usually the teacher has but an imperfect idea of the child's home-life. Often the parent fails to comprehend the purpose of the teacher. This is because they do not get acquainted, or, if they do, only in a casual way. Once a week, it may be, they sit beneath the roof of the same church, and occasionally they meet at some social gathering; and that is about all. Very true, the teacher in many a village is the recipient of considerable respect, but her or his real work is seldom half appreciated.

Suppose the teacher was invited more into the home-life of pupils. What advantages would result? Leaving out the benefit of mutual friendship, the parent would better learn the plans of the teacher, and the teacher would better understand the requirements of the scholar. Together they could better determine the needs of the boy, and work more intelligently to the end of making him a strong man.

As another result, the pupil's regard for the teacher would become more sincere, and, because of encouragement at home, his efforts in school would become greater. After the day's school is over, Susie and Tommy would not be so likely to run home to tell some deed of injustice or partiality, committed by the

teacher; and if they did, they would not have so much attention given to their complaints as is frequently the case now.

Again, were parents and teacher better acquainted, it is probable that parents would visit schools. This is their duty, and for their neglect there is no excuse. Scholars would see the cordial interest taken in them, and becoming accustomed to visitors, would learn to work in their presence without embarrassment. Moreover, people would get an intelligent idea of the wants and defects of the school-system—a subject of which as a whole, they are woefully ignorant. Whatever falls within the parent's notice, that could be improved, might be suggested in a nice way. No sensible worker would resent this, but rather appreciate it. Very pleasant it would seem, compared with the fault from the outside, that most country school teachers have encountered somewhere in their careers.

Contrary to a general belief, teachers are a very busy class of people. Instead of the six hours credited them, their day's work requires ten or twelve hours for its performance. Still, the most of us would appreciate invitations to the homes of our scholars. And we are willing to do all we can towards their promotion.

Parents in some country towns (only a few at present) are showing their regard for teachers by giving an informal reception or a sort of party in their teacher's honor once a term or once a year. Not only a pleasant evening is thus provided, but higher appreciation and friendship are promoted. It is a pretty custom.

RIGHT here it is well to say a few words about finding fault with the teacher. Parents and taxpayers are justified in demanding good schools, but with many we fear it is easier to grumble and gossip than to earnestly help regulate affairs that are going wrong.

When you as a parent have any fault to find with the teacher, it is better for you to go directly to her and in a courteous, distinct manner tell her what it is. Perhaps it may be righted at once. If the teacher disagrees with you, impartially consider her reasons for doing so, bearing in mind that from hard-earned experience she has learned much of school work and different scholars' dispositions. When the trouble is a matter of discipline, and the teacher seems unable to control it, lend her your help and hearty support, even if it involves a certain instruction of unruly boys and girls at home.

Remember ever that school teachers have feelings as sensitive to misjudgment and abuse as other people have; that their position is often very trying, and always a tedious strain on nerve and brain. Be considerate. In a willing, friendly spirit do all you can towards an amicable settlement of all differences before you rehearse their history to all your dear, trusted, intimate lady friends, before you expound the teacher's failings in the mighty assemblage of the village store. And if a real lady or gentleman, you will scarcely mention the matter at all. You may more properly enter your complaint to the superintendent.

Let your conduct with school officers be governed by this same code of rules. In many Maine towns, if

these rules were carried out, there would be a decided improvement in schools.

Some people in Maine would now do well to stop their fault-finding with the new school laws. The town system has had a thorough trial in other states and its workings found most satisfactory. On the face of it, its merits are sufficiently strong. Without the shadow of a doubt, it is here to stay. More equality, better teachers, more efficient supervision, the abolishment of small schools and their union with others, greater uniformity of grade and text-books, are some of the advantages already apparent.

No person of unprejudiced common sense would wish to go back to a system which divided the responsibility between the school-agents and "supervisor," or the school board; a system in which the town schools could begin at different times and every school be of different duration.

In almost every community have been a few clear-sighted, progressive men, who for a long time have persistently advocated the benefits to be derived from the town system, and they have urged its adoption. To these men we should be grateful. Scattered through our country are still a few grumblers who need to brush up their intelligence and try to see more of the beauty of this ever-moving world's improvements, else, using the pet phrase of one of our able politicians, they will get "speedily regulated to the rear."

For a few years in some towns there will probably be faulty administrations of the law. But that will not be the law's fault. Some nations might live under a better constitution than that of the United States

and still maintain a far inferior government. But it would not be the constitution's fault.

When there is jealousy and disruption in the school affairs of a town (to the disgrace of some New England towns, school fights still exist), the most sensible action is to stop quarrelling; merely stop. There is not likely to be much progress in a campaign of war; and parents cannot permit that their scholars shall lose any of the afforded advantages. In men's nature, at bottom, exists a love of equality and fairness; and in every community, pugnacious though it be, if overtures are made with wisdom and in calm reason, this elementary sense of right will prevail. If there is a serious attempt to settle differences sincerely and fairly, they will be settled. But if people must fight, let them pick up the cudgels over some other subject and pound each other roundly, rather than contend in a contemptible contest in which all the hardest blows are sure to fall upon the heads of their children.

WHILE the school term is in session, most of the scholar's time is needed for *study, exercise* and *sleep*. Parents should then discourage too great social activity for it is detrimental to the youth. It makes the student weary and unfit for school work, and he is liable to lose interest in his studies. If there must be a party or a dance, better plan to have it Friday evening or Saturday, and parents should see that the youthful participants are fully rested before Monday morning.

To get the best results from school, scholars must be regular in their attendance. Nothing is so pernicious

cious to a scholar's interest as to get his mind imbued with the idea that he can "stay out." Though the teacher be ever so efficient, she cannot fill the gap thus made. In a term of ordinary length if ten days are missed, the average pupil must lose one-third of what he could have attained, had he been present every day.

* The parent ought not to be a party to anything like this. An irreparable harm is done the child. He loses something which he can never regain, nor which can never be regained for him. "The teacher ain't good for nothin', and the young ones are better off at home" is a time-worn and foolish excuse, and is usually given by a slack, indifferent parent. Whether the teacher be perfect or not, it is good for the boy to know that he must go to school. Some parents have serious faults to answer for along this line.

Absences always make school work harder and less satisfactory.

In some cases the busy teacher would be justified in sending home the little mischievous scamp who comes to school merely because his mother does not want the trouble he would cause at home. It is a mistake to send children to school at a very early age. Until the child is six years old it is better for him to spend all

* The fact that there are so few children in the common schools over thirteen years of age, should alarm all who believe that the safety of the Republic depends on the education of the citizen. Eighty-seven per cent. of all the children found in the schools visited (two hundred rural schools in eight different counties of the State, visited by the State Superintendent) were under the age named above. This fact means that children are leaving school at much younger age than formerly. As far as could be learned, those who have left school are not attending other schools. The tendency to leave school and engage in some work, or waste the time in idleness, is increasing each year.—*Maine School Report*, 1895 p. 24.

his time and energy in bodily development; and if weak or sickly, schooling should be postponed till seven or eight winters have passed by.

PARENTS and citizens-at-large should bear in mind that they are an actual living part of the school-system; that by them it is authorized and directed from broad into specific channels; and that through them it must ever receive its strongest support. Clear-sighted men are sure to take a pride in their schools and to cast their endeavors towards making those schools compare favorably with others, for they know that cheapsparing will not benefit the children nor the town. Places giving the most liberal salaries are likely to get the best instructors and accomplish the most. Teachers do not work purely as a matter of philanthropy.

Parents should exercise a care concerning whom they elect for school officers. The best are none too good. None but those thoroughly interested in promoting educational advancement and cognizant with its needs should be chosen members of the educational board. Hardly a greater calamity can befall a town's schools than a period of incapacity or misrule on the part of directing officers.

If at all wise, parents will read the superintendent's annual report and consider its recommendations carefully. They should be prompt to co-operate with school officers and teachers in all needed improvements and reforms. Let all encouragement be given school entertainments and graduations, and insist that scholars take part willingly in the same. When the custom once becomes well established, all trouble (if there

was any) ends. From this training pupils are assisted in getting that experience and self-confidence, more essential than the learning of books. And more, they have something to work for, the attainment of which will be among the pleasant occurrences of their lives.

People often fail to give this help, presumably not realizing how much they can help, nor the influence of this training upon young people's subsequent success. Every life is liable somewhere to have its turning-point. Events past and hopes to come are balanced. The beam inclines to the side "I can and will" or "I cannot and will not try longer." If parents wish their children to become happier, more well-to-do, more successful than they have been, they must give the girls and boys better privileges than they used to enjoy when young. Even if inconvenience must be endured, if sacrifice must be made, nevertheless children need our kind, sympathetic encouragement.

The schools of our state were probably never in so good condition as now. But remember, parents, that their *greatest* need is not newer methods nor better books, but more attention, a more cordial interest and support from you.

IN home-life it rests with parents to develop and strengthen the child's character, to guide him in paths of usefulness, to impress him with a purpose in life, to kindly and firmly restrain him from doing wrong, to make him a good man and a worthy, self-sustaining citizen. We do not expect the foregoing suggestions can be carried out perfectly, but if parents would only try, they could perform them substan-

tially. The time wasted by many a New England country man is more than would be required in doing this. Let the matter be once earnestly taken in hand, and it becomes possible and practical; ere long it produces results and satisfaction. There is one word in which is expressed the sum of the whole. That word is DUTY. And this duty performed conscientiously and *persistently* will indeed induce children to become a joy and a blessing forever.

A SOUND body is one of the prime factors of happiness and success in life. Upon it depends one's whole mental and physical endurance. Without it the person of average capabilities is undone. Therefore it is of first importance to every individual to possess a goodly amount of bodily strength and learn how to conserve it, so that it may last the longer. And this is easy enough, if people would only do the best they know, heeding the lessons they ought to have learned long ago.

What a person inherits from his parents, what he eats and drinks, the exercise and rest which he takes, and the way in which he does all these things makes him what he is. These acts are vital concerns of living. Nothing could be plainer. Still there seems but a small chance for universal improvement in health, so long as people throw caution to the winds and blindly pursue the same old trodden courses, inviting dyspepsia, rheumatism, and the whole brood of diseases into their lives, to write miserable chapters there. Of the laws of cause and effect we careless, thoughtless people are apt to think nothing. We merely ignore the

cause, and when we feel its effects we attribute them to some physical demon that possesses us, instead of taking home the blame where it belongs.

It may be said here—not lightly nor irreverently, but seriously—that there is but one way to live correctly, and that way is to live scientifically. The laws of science are the laws of creation, and they govern all creatures and forces that therein are. God has established a plan of which we are a part. If we have inherited strong bodies and live according to His plan, barring accidents, we may confidently expect long, healthful lives. If we wittingly or unwittingly violate His plan, though our endurances be ever so great, some day in some way we shall surely reap the consequences. Being responsible beings, we should consider ourselves as such. And we should act far more intelligently if we looked after our health, ourselves, instead of shifting it all off upon “divine providence,”—a power that perhaps has nothing to do with our health, more than to give it to us and to provide the means of sustaining it, to be used wisely or foolishly, as we will.

Pure air is as essential to life as the food we eat. When breathed into the lungs a part of the oxygen—the gas, which is the prevailing part of air—is absorbed through the walls of the blood-vessels into the blood, uniting with the carbon of the digested food, which has also found its way into the blood by absorption, and is carried to every part of the body. The action of the oxygen with the carbon is called oxidation, a term meaning about the same as combustion, or the burning of something. This process, not unlike the burning of coal in our stoves, only milder, gen-

erates the heat of the warm blood current that goes coursing through every artery and vein.

Thus every day an average person gains rather more than twenty cubic feet, or nearly two pounds of oxygen, and loses a rather larger amount of carbon-dioxide, which if retained would be injurious to the system.

When we think of the matter we see clearly enough the need of pure air. But the real care is to get it instead of breathing the same air over and over again, until it becomes unwholesome. Probably every reader has entered a room from without in which the air seemed close and oppressive; and some may have experienced a dullness of mind, or a headache after staying in it a while. Living almost constantly in this vitiated atmosphere, as so many of us do, we rebreathe air that has served its use, and with it those waste impurities which come from the body in the exhaled breath. They, once more entering the blood, act as irritants and slowly poison the blood day after day, till our bodily energies become languid and flagging. Then is the favorable time for any disease to shackle itself upon us. And this course throughout is only natural, even if we do wonder at the ailment at last, and inquire how it came.

Unfortunately there seems to be no practicable mode of ventilation that works well in every shop, office and home. Various plans are employed. An open fireplace is probably as good as could be desired, but is usually out of the question. For one room, a piece of board about four inches wide may be put under the lower sash of the window, thus forming an opening between the upper and lower sashes through which the

air will gently enter and diffuse itself through the room. This is the means oftenest recommended in our physiologies, and is as good as any home-made device. In winter, when this method is not feasible, the doors and windows of our living- and sleeping-rooms should be thrown wide open and filled with fresh air as often as there are opportunities.

New Englanders almost invariably heat their apartments too hot. Surely, exposure is detrimental to our welfare, but if we inured ourselves to a lower temperature—about seventy—during the cold season, it would promote our clearness of mind and general health. With coal stoves care should always be taken that no gas escapes out into the room; and when fires are kindled with kerosene, the danger of the dreaded explosion is not so serious as that noisome vapor that sometimes pervades the air. In rooms heated by stoves the atmosphere quickly becomes drier than is healthful, but can be kept moist by keeping water in a receptacle upon the stove, so that it will slowly evaporate.

The body derives its nourishment and growth from food. In the alimentary canal this food undergoes various changes, and finally its nutritive parts become so transformed and dissolved that they are absorbed into the blood-vessels in the walls of the canal, coming at once into contact with the oxygen absorbed through the lungs. Hence the importance of digestion is fully apparent. By it our food, so essential to life, is prepared to sustain life. And if digestion be perfect, both mind and body can do their work easier, better, and not yield so readily to fatigue.

Nothing can be more logical. Yet physicians tell us that the stomach is the most abused of all bodily organs.

A duty of all parents is to see that their children live in the good air that God has so freely provided us, to see that they have all the plain, wholesome food they need, and that they eat it regularly and properly.* It is often remarked that perfect health is seldom enjoyed except in youth; and why? According to nature's plan a person ought to have perfect health and increasing strength till long after middle life. But the simple truth is that from the very habits of childhood the bodily functions are more or less deranged, and seldom get the chance of setting themselves right again. Parents are not altogether responsible for the habits of their children in mature life, but they should be very careful that they do not pervert or hinder the physical development of their offspring in helpless childhood. And yet, is it too much to say that in this particular millions are at fault?

If this chances to fall into the hands of a parent so skeptical of truth, or so dull of understanding that he cannot appreciate the advantages which prudence and knowledge furnish us, yet for the sake of his children, we ask him to consider the last pages of this chapter.

If you wish your girls and boys to form habits of

* Just which foods are best and which are not is a matter impractical for us to discuss. Indeed, it is something of which medical and scientific men would like to learn more. It is safe to say the plainer unseasoned foods, when properly cooked and eaten are best, and that pies, cakes, puddings, etc., are among the more harmful. In these advanced years everybody who does not know something of these matters should get a good book on hygiene and ascertain for himself the best known means of taking care of our physical selves.

strength and cleanliness, you must begin to inculcate these habits early, earlier than they would commence any other lesson. You must see that from the very beginning they have suitable attention, good air, and proper food. If these are not supplied as they ought to be, there will surely follow a greater or less detracting of the child's physical powers. Such neglect is entirely wrong. There can be no doubt that this very negligence, coupled with misdirection, or lack of direction in the preservation of health, is the cause why so many young people have enervated systems—bodies as unfit to support real happy, sparkling life as the unstrung bow for sending arrows. In these enlightened days not to realize and recognize these facts argues against your intelligence.

Few things are more exasperating than to see a mother with her infant in her arms, trying to make it drink a little tea, or stuffing the unnutritious potato down its mouth. But in many cases this is the way babies fare, and until they learn for themselves, their years of childhood and youth are directed as much by ignorance and as by any other agent. The following incidents may seem absurd to some readers, but to those who have a thoughtful, real interest in the development of good and strong children they will suggest a deeper meaning. They are fair examples of many like happenings, such as fall unasked within the notice of all observing people.

One evening two little girls, each about ten years old, sat down to the supper table. They were allowed to do about as they pleased, and vied with each other as to who should eat the most of one kind of food upon

the table, until they ate it all. After the meal was over one of the little girls ran to her mamma and exclaimed: "O, mamma, we tried to see who could eat the most doughnuts, and I ate five and Katie five and a whole piece of pie!" "O, that's nothing," said the unconcerned mother, "now pick up the dishes from the table as quickly as you can."

There is a little lad of eleven summers. His parents seem to love him more than the whole world besides. Being hardy, industrious country folk, they commence their work very early in the morning, but the little boy, tired by his play of the day previous, is allowed to sleep till seven o'clock, just as all active children should. After arising, dressing, washing his face and hands very clean, and brushing his clothes till they are tidy and neat, he goes into the kitchen and toasts a slice of white bread for himself. Then from the coffee-pot left for him on the back part of the stove he pours a cup full of rather black coffee. The one slice of white bread with butter and cup of coffee makes his morning meal, and though he plays or studies ever so earnestly, it suffices until noon; for this little fellow does not eat lunches. Probably the life he leads would have no detrimental effects upon a lad naturally stronger than himself. He began this kind of breakfasting three years ago, and now he is not so hardy as are most of his playmates at school; he is not as well as he used to be, and his parents fear he will not grow to be a strong, robust boy.

The foregoing merely illustrate an ignorance or carelessness that is well-nigh universal. Would not any thoughtful person see that the first performance was

improper in any sense of the word? Would not any thoughtful parent know that a boy cannot well get along without a good breakfast? If such abuses were only committed once they would amount to very little, but when repeated as they are year after year, is it strange that bodily constitutions bend and fall before them? Though the cause be ever so plain and the remedy ever so easy, if these children of whom we have spoken should grow sickly, their acquaintances would say they were unfortunate, for providence withheld from them one of its richest blessings: and fate is unkind to them, indeed! And such would seem the case, inasmuch as they were intrusted in dependent childhood to the keeping of parents who could not see the necessity of thought and care in rearing children.

And still people will wonder at the penalty nature exacts for her broken laws; still people, who from education and experience have every means of knowing, will say no harm can come to the body till the rules of health are broken; and those of duller perceptions will still insist that it makes no difference whether they are broken or not.

As stated before, parents should cultivate natural, healthy appetites in their children; *cultivate*, we say, just as you would bring out any other desirable feature of the child's education. And to do this you must give them plain, nutritious food to eat, instead of pampering their young appetites with all the sweet delicacies and spiced monstrosities which the cook-book tells you how to make. Children like this plain fare better, and complain of it less; and is there any reason why it is not the easiest and most sensible?

A breakfast is fully as essential, if not more so, than any other meal. And children, rather than get in the habit of going without it, better be sent back to bed till they are hungry. Many mothers do a great injury to their girls or boys by allowing them to play a forenoon, or go to school without eating anything, or even worse, after merely drinking a cup of coffee.

Lunches serve only to derange the appetite and bodily functions, but that they do very effectually. For the time being they detract from the child's vigor, and no doubt, in the long run are the cause of many ills. Children who do not lunch feel better and are better in body and mind. A firm, kind spirit that persuades by reason, exercised for a short time by the mother, will break off this harmful, needless habit.

Some people suffer inconvenience and worse from unsuspected deformities. Where the matter has been tested, it has been found that quite a percentage of scholars at school have imperfect eyes, causing headache and heaviness of mind. This can be attended to only by an optician. Then there are others whose shoulders are rounded or whose heads are held too low. Such boys are sometimes referred to as "shiftless." But in most cases, unless indolence is a natural heritage, the fault is simply because the muscles of the chest and neck in front are stronger than their opposites in the back. The stronger muscles pull the shoulders or head forward and destroy the nice balance of what might otherwise be a perfect figure. Were these children instructed to throw their heads and shoulders well back and keep the position for two or three minutes, to do this persistently, and to be careful

to *think* of maintaining good positions when walking and sitting, they would soon overcome this fault of form. The whole is usually caused by leaning over, or working in improper positions, and can be corrected by an exactly opposite posture. When anything happens to a child's health, look sharply for the cause.

Some people commit a fault in not keeping the home and its accessories in a sanitary condition. Upon the authority of a sensible old country physician, the drinking water in one-half of our wells and cisterns is wholly unfit for use. Perhaps no other one source is so productive of ill-health and disease as impure water, nor the cause of so many deaths each year. Yet this could in most cases be prevented, if we were only thoughtful enough to attend to it in season.

There are no duties more incumbent upon parents than those we have just considered. All who are not well informed in hygienic laws should take steps to learn them even as they love their children. The time is here when, instead of carelessness and dependence on old country whims, we must look to science.



THE SUPERINTENDENT'S PART.

The world needs men. A time like this demands,
Strong minds, true hearts, pure faith and ready hands,
Men whom the lust of office does not fill;
Men whom the bribes of office cannot buy;
Men who possess opinions and a will;
Men who have honor, men who will not lie;
Men who can stand before a demagogue,
And damn his treacherous flattery without blinking;
Tall men, sun crowned, who live above the fog,
In public duty and in private thinking.

Lowell.

PROBABLY the schools of Maine will never quite reach perfection, but if we go resolutely to work we can improve them vastly. In this work, next to the teacher stands the superintendent, for upon him largely depends the union and progress of school forces. He should be a man capable of discerning the needs of schools, correcting their wrongs and abuses, and placing them upon the foundation stones of equality, fairness and fraternity. The superintendent's responsibility is as great as that of any other town officer, and often his position requires courage, judgment and decision.

Town education has an object—the developing of children into thoughtful, practical, industrious men and women. As is the case in any other desired end, this can be accomplished best through a tangible, efficient organization.

But in many towns there are no school grades. The

schools are ungraded, a word that covers a great deal of confusion and wasted energy. Nor is there any reason for this, more than the fact that the ungraded system, having a century's prestige, has become customary and people have not yet awakened to the need of something better. Any school can be graded, even if three grades have to be in one room and one teacher instructs the three. The classes of the mixed school could well be sorted over, reduced in number and fixed in order or grade for the school year. This would be better for the teacher, since there would be more time to devote to each class, and better for the pupils, because instead of allowing them to follow whatever they please, breaking off one study and taking up another at will, it would compel them to complete an orderly course. This is a line upon which more ought to be done.

But it would be altogether proper for the superintendents of some of our village schools instead of putting more in, to consider the existing established grades. Many of them undoubtedly embrace too much. Most of them impose rather more work than can be accomplished thoroughly. A certain amount is prescribed, there is a certain length of time in which to do it, and it must be done. Others are coming to fill present scholars' places, and there can be no delay. If the class is dull and backward, or the time insufficient, the teacher must take hold and pull and push and lift with her whole strength, and then the work be done but slightly. Pupils quickly see this sham work in their education and are likely to grow peevish, indifferent, disgusted; and if they hear the system ad-

versely criticised by their elders, they may also lose their respect.

Thus, as is obvious to all familiar with children's natures, they lose interest in their work and depend more and more upon the teacher — a very detrimental habit often learned at school — and impair their own originality and independence to a corresponding extent.

We are unable to describe how, at a teachers' convention last autumn, State Supt. Stetson in his own inimitable way illustrated this weakness of graded schools, but the idea is substantially as follows: The graded system may be compared to an inclined plane. In the commencement, the teacher carpets it with the prettiest, softest carpet she can procure. Then to the boy standing nearly at the foot of this inclined plane she indicates a place farther up, and says, "Come up here." Probably the boy does not move, and quite likely answers "I won't!" Then the teacher, lifting him by main strength, carries him up and drops him. And the boy falls into a heap just as if he were a limp tow-string.

This is by way of illustration, of course, but it shows clearly the dispositions of many scholars, as they are acquired in our schools. That school-work is often done in a shiftless, spoiled way, and that it consequently does not sustain the youth as it ought, are deplorable facts. Presumably the too indulgent parents are often partly to blame. When properly directed, no one seeks to bring accusation against the system itself. The fault is with the manner in which it is abused. The superintendent should see that there is just the right amount of work in it. And the teacher should make

scholars walk up the inclined plane, and not let them get up to the top in any other way.

As a rule, school officers are too lax in their methods of promotion. No scholar ought to be admitted to a higher grade till he has thoroughly mastered the lower course, for the very reasons that it is an unkindness to him, an injustice to the teacher of the higher grade, and hurtful to the whole school. It is a matter of business, not of sentiment, and should be so understood. Let scholars once know they must advance through *their own* efforts. In some villages as affairs now stand, it would be better for all concerned to reduce the number of grammar schools, by taking enough pupils from them to fill one or two extra intermediate rooms.

* Where the graded system needs correcting it should receive it. One of the great questions is what is most practical to put in and what to keep out. When firmly and wisely conducted, because of its orderly arrangement, it possesses marked advantages over any other form of school. The teacher—the real teacher—can use all the time successfully with disciplined, interested, and frequently, original scholars. And such a school is one productive of pleasure and profit.

In connection with the foregoing, it is proper to make mention of our Free High Schools. In many towns they already form a part of the organized graded sys-

* Every town superintendent should consider the timely course of study found in the Appendix of the Maine School Report (1895). It is to be regretted that this earnest, energetic, progressive report cannot be read by every teacher, school officer and parent in the State.

tems, the state contributing a certain part of the fund and the town the remaining portion. In most of these schools are taught history, book-keeping, higher mathematics, and some of the languages and sciences. † Quite a large number ‡ of them fit students to enter classical colleges. Each school year is completed with a graduation, looked forward to with much interest by the pupils, as a fitting finale to their work. Moreover, these graduations receive cordial encouragement and financial support from both citizens and school officers. These facts speak well for progressive education in Maine. Such schools are a lasting benefit to any town, and the more desirable because they afford privileges which many worthy boys and girls cannot pay for at incorporated academies and seminaries.

EVERYTHING connected with the school grade should, in some sense of the word, be practical. Those branches which enlarge the information of the pupil and promote his all-round development are valuable.

Not one boy or girl of twenty can give anything approaching a comprehensive idea of one national congress, its duties, or even the duties of the President. Is it not a lack of sense to send scholars to our American schools and teach them nothing tangible of American government, and but little of American law and traditions? Aside from fragments of United States history and a sprinkling of civil government, their ready knowledge of this subject is very limited;

† See Maine School Report, 1894; p. 53.

‡ Between seventy-five and one hundred (estimated).

and they form no adequate, reliable idea of foreign countries.

Many a high school graduate does not know how to place the heading, the salutation or the body of an ordinary business letter. Again, there are scholars who have "learned" page after page of physiology and hygiene without a thought of its being intended for them, that they should apply the knowledge to their lives and get its benefit. After "completing" grammar, perhaps the boy exultingly shouts, "I ain't got to study grammar no more!" Indeed, such is not an infrequent expression. And so it is all the way through. Taking up one topic after another and one of the ruling ideas seems to be that of going over something for the sake of going over it, rather than for any special purpose, or to apply what is learned to help accomplish some purpose.

Certainly the teacher is partly responsible; but the superintendent should eliminate such unnecessary and puzzling matter as seems best, so as to give the teacher the time she so much needs to instruct scholars in subjects and habits that will potently influence their minds and bearing before the world. And he should insist that teachers employ practical methods instead of sham-customs in school work. Education must look not only to present but to future requirements. That surface knowledge which may enable a scholar to pass a good examination today is, after all, not so essential as the store of general intelligence that a young man or woman would like to possess when setting out in life.

The old practice of "speaking pieces" should in no-

wise be discontinued. Pupils need to establish confidence in themselves, for it is most useful in after life. The majority of scholars think they do not like declamations and are sometimes allowed to have their way. Some teachers prefer to escape the extra trouble. Superintendents ought to make this a part of the school course and see that it is carried out.

There are comparatively few scholars who can easily put their thoughts into nicely written expressions. Yet how many of the studies at school are as essential as this one? It is a most useful accomplishment, without which anyone can hardly write a good letter or an advertisement for the local newspaper. Composition-writing should have a place in *every* school, and be made a far more systematic study than it now is. Let it commence in the primary school in the shape of easy descriptions of familiar objects, and carried through every subsequent grade. Once taken in hand it calls out the youth's ideas in a way that will prove a lasting advantage.

At graduations, instead of the old-time original essays, the custom of giving selections from different authors is gaining ground each year, though as yet it may be confined to city graduations. We may well hope it will be confined to them, and that the country will not ape city customs. If the idea was simply to get up an interesting programme, this practice would do very well. But the real purpose is for the pupil to write an essay of his own, such as will bring out his mental powers and reflect credit upon himself,—a sort of climax to this school-course, as it were. Any

procedure that curtails originality is unsatisfactory and stupid.

There is but little good in scholars' using words of which they do not know the meaning. Yet this is common. In very many of our country schools the dictionary is not consulted half as often as ought to be the case. In connection with the reading lesson, it is advantageous for the class to look out the meaning and accent of some fifteen or twenty of the more difficult words selected by the teacher. Children should be helped about this at first and care taken that they only form such definitions as they themselves understand. Often the meaning of a word is well conveyed in a single synonym. It is also interesting to scholars when the teacher calls for synonyms of some of the more common words at sight. Dictionary work is especially practical and valuable because it helps form a more definite knowledge of language and enters into daily conversation. And teachers are so backward in giving this matter sufficient thought, that superintendents should attend to it.

IN nothing will the prudent superintendent take greater care than in choosing a new teacher. He will seek one live and progressive, perhaps one intending to make teaching a permanent occupation. When feasible he will make the selection early, and having secured a good teacher will retain her services as long as possible. From the Maine School Report are the following opportune suggestions: *

“Employ the best teachers obtainable for the wages

* For 1891; p. 45.

you pay without regard to favoritism, but giving preference when other things are equal to the residents of your own town, and giving due consideration to the wishes of those whose children will attend the school taught by any particular teacher. Employ for the whole school year whenever practicable and when the known qualifications of the teacher are such as to warrant it. Employ new or unknown teachers for a single term with the promise of subsequent employment if satisfactory work be done." Before going into the school a new teacher should in a general way be acquainted with its work and needs by the directing officer.

Between actual supervision and "going into school" twice a term there is a wide difference. Two visits a term are not enough. Three, perhaps, are sufficient for most rural schools. When practicable, the superintendent should make as many visits as seem necessary. Having placed the school in the hands of a teacher selected by himself, it is his place to give such help as he sees need of giving. In no other way will he be so likely to keep affairs directly in line. Some people go so far as to say that a good superintendent with poor teachers will accomplish more than a poor one with good teachers—without doubt an exaggeration;—but the good superintendent surely does get things much nearer perfection than the indifferent officer does.

He studies the needs of schools, and so far as possible supplies them. He helps impress the schools with the necessity and beauty of thoroughness. If those little fellows who were so rude last term now take off

their hats when entering the room, and answer "Yes, sir," and "No, sir," when replying to his questions, in his mind he quietly notes it down in favor of the teacher, and before going away he encourages them to do better still. He appreciates his teacher's strong qualities and next year may show his appreciation by placing her in a higher school. If he sees defects and mistakes he kindly criticises the same and suggests the best means of remedying them. Especially ought his sympathy and good will to go out to inexperienced teachers. Every one must make a beginning, and young teachers deserve the more consideration because their zeal has largely made up for the lack of experience and enabled them to do a good work in the past. The kind, courageous superintendent will always try to help his faithful teachers in every way.

It is only a justice to teachers that the old way of giving each teacher mention in the annual school report is so nearly a thing of the past. In them used to be printed some cruel statements, assertions misleading and unfair.

Unnecessary to say, scholars quickly appreciate any little favor or kindness the superintendent may show them. And it is his duty to see that they are not compelled to memorize long mathematical rules and endless series of definitions, and moreover, that they have suitable intermissions. A fifteen-minute recess in both forenoon and afternoon and one and a half hours at noon are practicable for country schools. As a matter of economy or health, children should not be required to study more than an hour and a half at a time.

The growing practice of not commencing schools till the middle of September and completing the school year by the middle of June, is most commendable. The three or four weeks of warm weather thus avoided are the hardest of the year for pupils and teachers.

WE know that parents as a rule seldom visit schools..

Suppose some afternoon the superintendent meets his friend Jones on the street and after accosting him, says: "Jones, I've just come from school; we are having a fine school. Why don't you go in some day?"

"I would like to, but my business keeps me at work all the time," answers Jones.

"Oh, well," rejoins Supt. Smith, "Let your business go for an hour some time, and see what a good school we have got."

A few mornings later Smith meets Jones again and inquires:

"Well, Jones, haven't you been into school yet?"

"No; haven't any time," replies Jones, laconically.

But afternoon comes. Jones, lamenting a dull head, sits at his desk with a ledger before him. Suddenly comes the idea, "Why not leave these accounts and see what Herbert is doing at school?" No sooner thought than done! He resolves to spend an hour in school. Soon after his arrival he forgets his aching head and becomes so interested that he stays the whole afternoon. Of course this is helpful to the school, for Jones is enthusiastic in his praises of it. Besides, he himself got some new ideas.

Would superintendents urge parents to visit schools more, they would at least do some good.

PROBABLY there are no model school-buildings such as would please everybody. But let us study some of the plainer requisites of a serviceable set, adapted to the requirements of village and country schools.

The schoolhouse should be pleasantly located on high ground. Around it and inclosed by a fence should be a spacious play-ground really large enough for scholars to play in without trespassing on neighboring lots. Everything about the premises should be kept tidy and clean. All school-rooms—natural receptacles of dirt and crayon dust—should be thoroughly cleaned *after every term*, instead of once in three terms. All damp, decaying matter should be removed from the wood-shed, and other out-buildings kept in order and covered every year with a new coat of paint. For the sake of economy and good appearance, everything about the school property should be kept in perfect repair. All these things are likely to occasion superintendents additional trouble, but health and economy demand it.

A more difficult matter is to get a constant supply of good air. Perhaps this is the reason why so many school-rooms, aside from doors and windows, have no means of ventilation, and so very few an adequate system. Nevertheless it is most important that without a perceptible draught, the impure air shall go out and fresh air take its place. The brightest scholar cannot work so well in a vitiated atmosphere, and the best

teacher cannot prevent her school from becoming dull. Looking at the subject in a wider and more essential view, there never has yet been a satisfactory exhibition of the effects, temporary and lasting, which ill-ventilated school-rooms have wrought in delicate and sickly children. One of the most important duties of the school board is to see that all scholars when in the school-room can be supplied with pure air.

In cold weather school-rooms should be furnished with some system of steady, uniform heat. Steam or hot water heat is the best and most economical in many instances, but when neither of these seems practical, a good coal or wood stove should be provided. We say a *good* stove, because so many of our school houses have old worn-out pretences that outlived their usefulness long ago and are now sources of almost constant annoyance and discomfort.

The pupils desks should be adapted to those who have to sit in them, not being so low that the occupant will feel "cramped," nor so high that the feet cannot rest fairly upon the floor. They must be near enough together so that the pupil will not have to lean forward in studying the book which lies opened before him. School life is not designed to bring on deformities. The desks should face the part of the room without windows, the light entering the room behind them, so the strain on the pupils' eyes need not be unnecessarily severe. A substantial desk large enough and strong enough for the accommodation and protection of all her school-effects should be provided the teacher.

All school-rooms should have sufficient blackboard

space. Blackboards may well extend around the room, excepting the door and window spaces. Often in a progressive school of twenty-five scholars, two hundred and fifty square feet of space is none too much.

Besides there should be a well-chosen and ample supply of charts, wall-maps, globes, geometrical solids and other needed illustrative apparatus. All these things are essential to the most thorough work and a great convenience to the teacher.

Whenever the financial standing of the town permits, the school should have a piano or an organ, and vocal music be a part of the prescribed course. It is a pity that so many of our schools, that might accomplish a great deal in this way, do so little. Music is more practical than many of the topics taught scholars. It has its own peculiar, enrapturing charms, elevating, ennobling, refining; and its influence can be appreciated by all classes of people, as well as by those only who are rich or profoundly learned.

A suitable book-case—a chest is not the thing—for books belonging to the town should be in every schoolhouse. In it the books may be kept conveniently and orderly, and those not in use safe behind lock and key. All school books should be numbered and catalogued and arranged so systematically that the whereabouts of any volume can be ascertained at a glance. The teacher must know she is responsible for books, and when any are taken from her school to another they must be credited to her account. All this may seem very simple, yet it is a task; and perhaps the citizens of many towns would be surprised to know

the carelessness and loss there is in the handling of town books.

NO duty is more incumbent upon the school board than the supply and retention of the fittest text-books; nor, considering the vast array to choose from, is there any duty requiring nicer judgment and firmer decision. It is unwise in the extreme to give a few dollars too much consideration, or to heed the plausible claims of rival agents—for school-book politics now run high,—but to examine carefully what they represent as their best works and independently select those which seem to be the most logical, up-to-date, and adapted to scholars' requirements. To get the best books should be the prevailing thought. If there is any great difference as to cost, quite likely it is because the publishers wish to unload an edition going out of use. When standard works are bought there is no great choice between the prices of different companies.

In every town school system ought to be a library for reference and general reading. A large dictionary is now held to be a necessity in every school,—yet how many schools are without one. Mention the idea of having an encyclopædia and other needed reference books and someone is sure to say: “Oh, yes, no doubt they would be helpful, but not many towns (meaning the adjoining two or three towns, of course,) have got them yet, and we had better wait for some of the others.” Broach a plan for a school library, and it is safe to say many people would condemn it without reserve, declaring that pupils at school had better confine themselves strictly to school-books and nothing else.

Suppose we study this subject more critically. Beginning, can any one of us think of any great, high, unsurmountable obstacle (meanness and negligence excepted) why almost any intermediate room and grades above should not have a suitable dictionary? Going farther, when the pupil in his reading lesson sees a casual reference to Joan of Arc, naturally he says, "I would like to know more about her ;" and if there is an encyclopædia in which he can find what he wishes, must we not admit that he has added to his store of knowledge? Or again, when he studies about oxygen and would like to know more about it, can we say otherwise than that the encyclopædia is a useful agent in promoting the boy's general intelligence?

But we will go farther. Last June a dear boy, the pride of his parents, graduated from the excellent high school which his village supports. Now he has just returned from a visit, and says, "I must have books to read. Mr. Brown tried to talk with me concerning some of the works of Hawthorne and Stevenson and Hugo, and I couldn't converse well because I knew so little about them. And one of Uncle John's friends tried to discuss European affairs with me, and he made mention of people and places that I ought to know all about, but if I ever heard of most of them I have entirely forgotten them. I was disappointed with myself, and somehow couldn't help thinking everybody I met was surprised to think I am going to enter college this fall and yet know so little."

Is there anyone so blind as to say that that boy during his grammar- and high-school days did not need books for general reading, and that he would not now be a

broader student, had he had them? Is there any one who still thinks that education is merely that proficiency and knowledge of certain subjects acquired in the grammar school, the fitting school and the college? — nothing more? Happily, people are recognizing more fully the need of a more general intelligence gained from reading, conversation and reflection. Some may say it is each parent's duty to provide his own children's books. Very true; but it seems this boy's parents did not do that. And there are thousands of other parents in our State who do not. When we find affairs not as they ought to be, we must make the most out of them as they are. Proper books in the hands of the young are mighty agents, promoting pleasure, readiness, strength, character, and width and depth of mind. Through the influence of books, youths are likely to become better citizens.

A few enterprising Maine towns have founded school libraries; yet of the whole number, how many? Every town ought to have its library. Until we have more of them there will remain a serious hinderance to a universally symmetrical education. Without a good supply of books, the majority of people are unlikely to gather so much of that varied information as is good for the general weal of the nation. Here is a field in which interested superintendents can work. They can do missionary service, overcoming opposition, presenting the necessity of such institutions, warming public sentiment towards them. They can help get up school entertainments, the proceeds of which shall make the beginning. In their reports they can recommend their

towns to vote twenty-five or fifty dollars to help the purpose along.

In any village a fiftieth part of the money expended in pleasures and luxuries would be ample to put into the enterprise that we are considering. The task would not be hard when taken in hand enthusiastically and courageously. In these days of abundant literature a choice library of respectable proportions may be collected in a short time. And through the years that follow it would grow and become a monument to some of the world's benefactors.

OUR State system contains an awkward feature. The school year the country over begins in late summer or early autumn, and schools usually graduate their classes in June.

Our fiscal year commences in March when town officers are elected. Soon the superintendent is chosen, and in March or April teachers are engaged for the summer term, or the school year. Thus it quite often happens in this summer term, the *last* term of the school year, that a new teacher takes charge of a school with which he was previously unacquainted. He has to complete work which he did not begin, and in some schools pick up the threads of graduation plans with which he had nothing to do. Both teacher and school are placed at a disadvantage. Without further comment this is obviously a poor arrangement. The matter should be presented to citizens in school meeting and a plan formulated, so that teachers can begin work at the commencement and close at the end of the school year.

The school superintendent must take as much interest in his work as he expects his teachers to take in theirs. To him is entrusted the system through which intelligence is augmented and character molded. Upon him the system's excellence depends. To this end he must court the co-operation of citizens and expend their money wisely. He must keep in touch with educational works, reading educational literature and above all else the recommendations and statements contained in the State Superintendent's Annual Report. And he must keep in harmony with youthful minds so that he can be pleasing to them, and they in turn will respect him and his wishes.



THE SUCCESSFUL TEACHER.

The twig is so easily bended
I have banished the rule and the rod ;
I have taught them the goodness of knowledge,
They have taught me the goodness of God.

C. M. Dickenson.

If I were obliged to leave off preaching and the other duties, there is no office I would rather have than that of school teacher ; for I know that this work is with preaching the most useful, the greatest, and best ; and I do not know which of the two is to be preferred. For it is hard to make old dogs docile, and old rogues pious ; yet that is what the ministry works at, and must work at in great part in vain ; but young trees, although some may break, are more easily bent and trained. Therefore let it be one of the highest virtues on earth faithfully to educate the children of others who neglect it themselves.

Luther.

WHEN children go to school we are not to suppose their lives are like sheets of blank paper upon which the teacher can easily write lessons of future industry and usefulness. Far from it. Before they pass through the schoolhouse portals, their parents have indelibly stamped the prints of good or evil upon their baby lives which no one can wholly erase. In-

born characteristics, whether of brilliancy or stupidity, worthiness or unworthiness, virtue or vice, are bound to have a potential influence. The teacher must make the most of her pupils as they are, impressing and exemplifying those traits which she would inculcate in them. "It is the teacher's spirit which inspires her pupils to the love of learning, to right action, to earnest doing; her thought directs, her knowledge informs, her skill instructs, her will governs."* She is a leader instead of one to be led.

Luther, the reformer, clearly understood the true purpose of education, notwithstanding the fact that he lived two hundred and fifty years ago; "bent and trained" in the sense in which he used it expresses as much as many written pages. Although she cannot erase inherent faults, the teacher can make them less conspicuous and influence the lives of her pupils to higher planes and nobler desires; she can instill habits of care, exactness, clearness, and encourage youth to make the most of what is in them. Her work is not merely to impart mental training from books, but a real and lasting acquaintance with practical things, to develop high moral character, to evolve, if it may be, an able, always, a well-meaning, industrious citizenship for the world. Truly our profession is a noble one, its influence incalculable and without end.

School teaching is largely a matter of disposition.

* Maine School Report (1894).

I hope some of the features of this chapter may prove helpful to young teachers, and possibly interesting to those more practiced in the work, as we often learn from each other. Otherwise I should hardly venture to address my fellow-teachers, so many of whom are my superiors in experience and education.

To attain to the highest excellence of which she is capable, the teacher must study child-nature until her understanding is so deep that she can profit by it; she must cultivate a friendliness for children, and get thoroughly in love with her work; must ever seek to improve her education and broaden her general information; must discipline herself, overcoming and guarding her faults, perfecting her fitness; must be discrete in employing methods, perhaps testing them only casually at first, till she can better determine their merits; must persevere till her judgment, tact, clearness, accuracy and controlling power become like inherent parts of her disposition, entitling her to an honored place among the instructors of children. Also, the teacher should possess a strong, independent character and sound health, a blessing of which too many teachers are careless. Intelligence, thorough work, in a word, success, comes only through persistent, dauntless effort.

WHEN the little scholars enter the primary school they must be impressed with the necessity of obedience and good behavior. They must obey every command willingly, cheerfully, implicitly, and without hesitation. And this must be insisted upon up through successive grades, so that the pupils may become accustomed to work under a wholesome discipline, advantageous to all concerned. Scholars should be *taught* to stand and sit properly, to move promptly and quietly, to speak distinctly and gently, to attend to their work dilligently. During intermission they should not be allowed to play too noisily and violently indoors.

Better that rough play be carried on outside. Rainy days a quiet, interesting game of some kind in the school-room, and a little tact on the part of the teacher will go a long way toward preserving quiet.

The school should be a school of good manners, as well as of mind and character building. A boy should remove his hat from force of habit whenever he enters the school-room; and all girls and boys should clearly understand the advantages gained from easy, pleasing manners and a considerate, unselfish respect for school-mates and teachers.

The lack of authority and sound discipline is felt in many of our schools — perhaps the majority of them. The interest which the teacher arouses in school work may be a great help in the matter, and self-government which should be commended to scholars and encouraged, may become another potent factor; but beyond these the teacher must let the scholars know that her strength is ample, that her readiness and firmness are equal to all occasions. Just how children do it no one seems in a hurry to explain, but they *do* have a way of applying their measuring-rods to their elders and determining strong and weak qualities with an unerring accuracy.

Not very long ago a large intermediate school boy who had been kept after school, upon coming out, said to one of his companions, "I was planning to get out early and go skating; and wasn't I mad when she told us we must stay and get that lesson over again. But then," he continued philosophically, "I knew we would have to get it and might as well laugh as cry." Unconsciously that boy uttered a splendid testimonial of

his teacher's fitness. If she had been habitually slack or inefficient, he probably would not have taken so sensible a view of the matter.

Some teachers while giving a reprimand seem to get nearer the scholar's heart. The very best punishment is that happy combination of reason and reproof that discourages the bad and helps the good. But when this fails a severer method may be employed, nor should it be too long delayed. Perhaps in some cases the birchen rod has not quite out-lived its usefulness. When it is employed it should be taken in hand as the very last resort and used discretely, but with a will. It is apt to do a refractory boy lots of good and quite as apt to do the teacher harm. Those teachers who in some way manage to antagonize their scholars get into numerous difficulties, while but few of those who govern firmly, decidedly and energetically ever encounter serious trouble. In these two thoughts is food for reflection.

ONWARD and upward we must hold our course.

No teacher as a practical matter of business can afford to miss teachers' meetings, conventions, etc., or to do without a regular school periodical and two or three good books on educational subjects each year; for they make the teacher who knows how to use them a far stronger teacher, assuring her greater success and a better position. Those excellent publications whose purpose is the diffusing of improvements and newer methods are indispensable to the progressive work of the live instructor.

The more one has to do with teaching, the plainer

does that person see the amount of work involved and how much must be learned from different sources in different ways to make a fit teacher. It is not within the plan of this chapter to treat of methods in any other than a very general way; and the few suggestions presented are chiefly for inexperienced teachers.

Briefly, the objective should not be sacrificed to the subjective, and *vice versa*. Years ago education consisted chiefly of committing to memory. Set, inflexible questions, and committed answers were in vogue. The lessons in the text-books were assigned and scholars compelled to learn them whether they could understand the meanings or not. The memorizing of endless definitions and ninety and nine needless rules was involved. To many dispositions this work was tedious and almost unbearable,—well calculated to create a dislike for school. The system served to discipline the mind along purely mechanical lines, but was not valuable in training independent thinkers, i. e., if one thought in an independent way, they did so in spite of the system instead of being guided by it. The pupil's ideas necessarily conformed too closely to the author's to greatly stimulate individual expansion. In the light of more recent years the defects of this memorizing and catechising method are plainly apparent. It carried the subjective system too far.

Now has come a sharp, significant change. No longer do progressive workers spend so much time in the memorizing of sections and rules, as in looking at the thing itself. No definition of a pyramid or a cube gives the child so clear an idea as the figure itself when placed in his hand; no description of a draft so

patent as the draft itself; no section of text-matter can convey as comprehensive an idea of Niagara Falls as a half dozen good engravings. Many things, obscure and almost meaningless to the pupil, become plain by illustration.

In arithmetic the teacher cares not so much for the set directions of the text book, as for the pupil's understanding of the relations and purposes of numbers, and aptness in stating the reasons for his work in a concise, logical way. * Or in geography none of us would punish the pupil by requiring him to learn by heart page after page of the text, as some of us had to do, but rather present the more essential parts so clearly as to firmly imbed them in his mind. We would make the subject so interesting that with encouragement he will read, compare and think for himself, thus calling out and widening his ideas. And so with other studies.

The present advanced methods of teaching foster acuteness and quickness of the observing and reasoning powers. No doubt that as a system it has marked advantages; but it also has its imperfections. In the end it will be carried too far, and then will come the inevitable reaction.

One drawback lies in the fact that some scholars, ever ready to seize an advantage are loth to enter into the spirit of work, but attempt to squirm out of everything which they are not expressly told to commit. However, it is only just to say that this is not always the pupil's fault; but if the scholar does not take an

* In no study can the back text be reviewed in a colloquial manner to better advantage than in geography.

interest, his education may not enter far beyond the surface. Acuteness, readiness and self-reliance are all valuable to their possessors, but width and depth and strength of mind are needed to sustain these characteristics; and depth of mind is well acquired through subjective education.

From what has perhaps been a too narrow field of observation, it has seemed to the author that those are the best teachers who give considerable heed to memorizing, carrying out the main plan of the text, explaining and illustrating as they go, and causing their pupils to reason, explain and illustrate. The scholars' understanding seem more substantial and lasting. Instead of a mere smattering of this or that, they seem to be *sure* of something. The subjective system seems to aid the objective in developing real, sustaining strength.

THE successful teacher is necessarily adept in conducting recitations, in seeing needs, and devising ways and means. This faculty is the keystone of the entire arch, and, in truth, is a work of fine art. Specific directions for conducting class work must fall far short of the mark. However, it may be expedient to offer the following generalities.

In the profitable recitation the pupil must perform work and answer questions promptly, obey implicitly, be worthy of his teacher's confidence, depend on himself, and do his best always. He must understand he is working for himself, and thoroughly prepare his lesson before coming to the class.

The teacher must not attempt the recitation until

she knows just what it involves, and has a clear idea of the way in which she will present it. Otherwise she is liable to bungle, confusing the scholar instead of elucidating the lesson. Moreover, she must consider her pupils' individual needs, capabilities and deficiencies, so that she can help each scholar to good advantage. And she must discriminate between the practical and impractical, the possible and impossible.

From the beginning the teacher must be interesting enough to hold the attention of the class; but if a pupil is persistent in turning his mind to outside matters, he should be made the subject of extra attention, and perhaps he should be reasoned with and reproofed. Careful attention to this is important, and the habit must be fixed, be the trouble and cost what it may.

The teacher must be apt in illustration. Yet it is a mistake to illustrate and talk too much. When the subject under consideration encourages it, the recitation can be carried along on colloquial lines to great advantage. This method is more engaging and entertaining. It stimulates the pupil's observation and thoughtfulness, rounds out his ideas and is not so easily forgotten. Care must be taken that scholars express exactly what they mean in language concise and correct. When they have not been in the habit of doing this, they will quickly learn to use only proper expressions if the teacher always corrects their mistakes and faults. Class discussions, aside from their subjects are most useful, because they learn (should learn) children to converse easily, even elegantly, and without embarrassment.

Pupils learn to do by doing. In mathematics noth-

ing is so valuable as a thorough, systematic drill at the boards. The performed work may be used as the basis of questioning, reasoning and explaining, the same care being taken that both the observing and reflecting powers be brought into action, and that all statements are logical and straight to the point. Neglect in this matter is clearly shown in the fact that one-half of our advanced scholars in school, if asked to do so, can not in well chosen, correct terms, promptly state the difference between a square and a parallelogram.

In every recitation *something* should be impressed thoroughly upon the mind. That is the purpose of the recitation. Thoroughness should pervade the whole work. The following good advice to superintendents is better still for the consideration of teachers. * “The utmost thoroughness of work should be insisted upon in the instruction of all the schools. Teachers should be required by constant and thorough review work, to keep their pupils constantly ready for examination in all the work of the term; and systematic and thorough examination of all schools should be had at the end of each term’s work. The work of every term should be so thoroughly and completely done that there will be no need of doing any of it over again in subsequent terms.”

At no time is it advisable to take up more text than can be utilized and applied. It is a shame that so much of the pupil’s time is thrown away, even in fundamental branches like geography and grammar; and this, because the idea is to *get over* something instead of getting an understanding of subjects and how to

* Maine School Report, 1894, p. 47.

make them useful in after life. All work should be connected with its purpose. "Do less and do it better," would be a good motto for many teachers.

In illustrating principles and facts, the teacher, so far as seems consistent, must use familiar objects, and interest her pupils by tactfully drawing from her storehouse of information. She must make the difficult places plain by explaining them again and again, if really necessary. Illustrations not easily comprehended had better not be employed, as they are liable to squelch whatever insight and interest the pupil has in a subject.

The skillful teacher talks enough and not too much. Everything must be to the point. But the scholar must be encouraged to do for himself all that he is capable of doing. For if self-dependence is not learned in youth, one of the greatest lessons must be learned, if ever, in after life.

Every class entering a higher room from a lower one brings some commendable features of class work inculcated by its teacher. And the thoughtful, appreciative higher-grade teacher will continue these features lest they be soon forgotten.

Pupils must not get the idea that the teacher is to do the reciting instead of themselves. They must not be allowed to bluff, or to guess at answers. By word, or tone of voice the teacher's question must in nowise imply the answer; nor must she in this way or that way suggest the desired reply. Indeed, fellow teachers, this is one of the great subjects of which we must think more, learn more. Many, very many of us do not realize how miserably we conduct our recitations. Let IMPROVEMENT be our watchword.

OUR scholars would learn a great deal more if there were reading tables in all grammar and high school rooms. That many parents would object strenuously to such innovations there can be little doubt. Nevertheless the children of these very same parents are ignorant of the institutions and forms under which we live. The reading table is needed. One clean, full daily newspaper, or better, two, so people of different political belief may be satisfied, should be provided; also one or two good weeklies and as many monthly magazines.

* When periodicals are in the school room, many scholars of their own accord will read and gain more or less; but the plan must go further. Fifteen or twenty minutes of each day in school can in no other way be used so profitably as in the learning or the reviewing of yesterday's occurrences. The teacher may

* I may be pardoned, I hope, for inserting this list of publications which has been used successfully:

	FOR THREE MOS.
Boston Daily Herald,	\$1.50
Boston Daily Journal,	1.50
Public Opinion (weekly),	.65
Youth's Companion (weekly),	.45
Cosmopolitan (monthly),	.30
Review of Reviews (monthly),	.75
	\$5.15
Stationery and postage,	.20
	\$5.35

In this case the scholars and their parents subscribed the required money. One State paper ought to have been added to the list. It is better that the illustrated comic magazines form no part of the scheme. Many of their pictures and jokes are in poor taste; all that glitters is not gold. Besides, school has no time nor place for stories of tramps, silly love-talk and abuse of public men.

ask such questions as seem best, make such explanations as seem necessary, and be sure to give the school something to read and think about for the morrow. Pupils in history would know ever so much more about Congress and the President, our laws and customs, the government of our own State, and our prominent people, if they from day to day followed the record of current events.

The tariff is a question which has been discussed and voted upon in our country for many years. Still it is doubtful if one-half of our voters can explain in an intelligent form what a tariff is and how it is imposed. Surely not one scholar of twenty can — scholars of our grammar and high school's. If our schools are not to make better citizens for our Republic, what are they for? And how can citizens act intelligently upon subjects which they imperfectly understand? There is little use in ignoring important questions in school simply because they happen to be questions upon which people feel. There is nothing objectionable in telling just what a tariff is. In an exact, truthful way the whole matter may be presented so clearly that pupils cannot help understanding it. And yet nobody could justly accuse the teacher of teaching politics, nor would anyone think of doing so. There are other questions besides the tariff, of which school boys and school girls ought to have some definite knowledge, and no one seems to be placed in so good a position to impart this knowledge as the school teacher. When these subjects are tactfully presented to pupils, they are engaging and instructive, and when presented impartially without argument or inference *pro* or *con*.

the teacher need have no fear of treading upon too delicate ground. If unfair in her (or his) way of presenting a public matter (what we might call teaching politics), the teacher would quickly get into a maelstrom of trouble and, perhaps, deserve dismissal.

If the reading table plan was carried out it would help form a taste for current reading. It would interest scholars and promote all-round development. Moreover, it could be made the basis of considerable composition work. The teacher who means to be a live, progressive teacher can well think of the plan.

SMALL duties must not be overlooked. All the hundred and one little things in the schoolhouse must be kept attractive and in order. Children should be encouraged to adorn the room with ferns and flowers. The teacher must be cheerful, agreeable and exemplary. The crayons must be distributed at the boards, the books in their proper places, the room well ventilated and not over-heated. The teacher must see that her pupils are civil to passers-by during intermission, and that they do not trespass upon neighboring grounds. She must appeal to the heart and try to influence her girls and boys so that they will be disposed to do right from their own sense of propriety and duty. She must cultivate in her scholars a liking for goodness and beauty.

The thoughtful teacher is sure to think of her absent pupils. If one is ill, she can show her sympathy in the form of a short call. If one is absent without sufficient reason, she does well to report his absence to

the truant officer, before the habit of staying away from school becomes fixed.

No teacher is perfect. Each has her faults, each sees imperfections in her work. But let not one of us be discouraged. "Perfection is never fully reached," said Lord Chesterfield, "but those who strive with a will get very much nearer to it than those who strive not at all."

MANY of us find teaching the pleasantest of all occupations—a task into which we can put the whole energies of our souls. It is not always so, for before young teachers sometimes the clouds arise troubled and stormy. If you are a teacher trying your best to expand the intellectual powers of your pupils and to improve their appearance, and people fail to appreciate your work, let not that fact swerve you from your work. "These parents are content to do as their fathers did," you say; "they dislike my progressive methods; and if I merely hear the classes read and recite and spell in the old way, the work will be just as satisfactory to them and not nearly as hard for me."

No! no! fellow teacher, say not so. You ought to know your own work and be guided by your own knowledge. People may become encrusted and crusty, too; and yet after a while, when a pulse-wave of progress has swept their way, they will appreciate what you once did for their school. But even if they never thank you, their children sometime will, and call you blessed. Continuing to do your duty zealously, in a few years you will learn so much yourself that, looking back from your vantage ground, you will be surprised

to see how far you have risen above your former critics, who will still be wrangling in the narrowness of their own little minds.

It is characteristic of average people of average New England communities to gossip. When they see, or imagine they see, a demerit in you, they are pretty sure to discuss it. You cannot help their talk. Like the love of liberty it is irresistible and insuppressible, and will live on. People must have their say. Simply show your good sense by keeping aloof and ignoring the matter. If you are discrete, all their gabbling cannot hurt you. It is not worth one moment's worry or anxiety on your part, and were it not for the harm it does scholars, would be of small moment, indeed.

Think not that others have not encountered experiences similar to yours. Thousands of teachers have passed through severer ordeals and have come out better and stronger workers. Enhance your reputation by going straight ahead and working with a will. Let your course be on! on!

However, it may not always follow that you are not at fault, or partly so. Whenever the world seems to go against you, study yourself critically and fairly. Finding your faults, you can better guard against them; and profiting by circumstances as you rightly may, you can pick up the broken threads and mend them. You will be repaid if you keep in the good graces of all people, so far as you can consistently. Some moment you may forget your kindly feelings toward everyone and think, "I am very tired just now and don't want to make the acquaintance of that person, he seems so dull." Still, you are wise in gaining

his friendship, though he be ever so uninteresting. Trials unforeseen may arise at any time, and possibly that very person is the one who will speak good words for you.

Most teachers commence teaching near home, and in their youthful experience are apt to make their worst mistakes. Doubtless this is one of the reasons why so many prefer to work away from their own towns. Be that as it may, the testimony of many a teacher is that she was unhonored in Nazareth and unsuccessful, but later, moving to Capernium, became successful. In our noble profession it requires no little thought and judgment on the part of each of us to determine where we can work to the best advantage for ourselves and the commonweal.



PART SECOND.

(TO SCHOLARS.)

A TALK ABOUT A PURPOSE AND THE START.

What the child admired
The youth endeavored, and the man acquired.

Dryden.

Nor to thyself the task shall be
Without reward; for thou shalt learn
The wisdom early to discern
True beauty in utility.

Longfellow.

THIS morning the sun came out of the East—it appeared to—and the clouds melted to nothingness before it—they seemed to. The sun grew brighter and more brilliant still as higher it rose. Its power became greater, its beams stronger. Onward and on, so even, so strong, increasing in splendor, until the zenith was reached and the heavens with brightness were aglow. And then did its beauty begin to wane? No. All the while as it tipped and then pursued its downward course, its rays grew warmer, softer, until apparently the sun sank behind a western mountain.

Meantime, upon a pond between two lonely hills a crowd of merry girls and boys were enjoying the fine skating afforded by the late autumn. As they con-

tended in their sports, their shouts and laughter dying away mid the trees of the hillside quickly to break out again, were suggestive of the happiness of youth. At length the parting sun-rays flitted pleasantly, and beautifully illumining the western sky, died away. The chill, clear atmosphere of night settled down, the darkness gathered, the children departed and the lamps were lighted in the not far distant village. The day was done. In the language of the poet it was "a picture and a hope."

As I saw the sun of the morning rise so bright and hold its course so majestic and strong till evening, the question occurred and re-occurred, "How can we who are young make our lives bright and happy, majestic and strong, even to the setting of life's sun."

BOYS AND GIRLS OF MAINE: To most of you I am a stranger, and your names and faces are unknown to me. Yet I know something of your capabilities and realize more or less perfectly the benefit you can be to yourself and the world, if you earnestly try to turn your talents to account. This is one reason why I take so deep an interest in you. Now, I suppose each one of you is anxious to succeed in life, to elevate yourselves to honorable positions and to enjoy that comfort and satisfaction that comes from usefulness.

To this end, this evening I want to have a little talk with you, which I hope will help you. I am not going to try to tell you just what actions you will have to perform to become successful, for that would be as impossible as was Mrs. Partington's attempt to mop up the ocean. I shall only try to set you to thinking and acting for yourselves. Nor do I wish to frighten you

by the seriousness of what I am going to say. Let me assure you, as one acquainted with boys and girls, that if you follow out everything I shall suggest the best you can, it need not detract the smallest trifle from your merriment of mind or lightness of heart; but in the long, long end can hardly fail to be a comfort to you. Of course I must write what I am going to say, but I want you to think of it as a talk—a written talk.

Let me ask one of you a question. Did you ever think why you receive careful training at home and at school? It is because you are fitting yourself to carry on some work in life. You may never have thought of it before, but youth is the time for preparation.

Another question: Did you ever think what occupation you would like to follow best when you get old enough to work for yourself? If not, you can think of it this week, this year, or the next five years. You need to have some aim in life, a goal in view towards which you can run. Then you have a better idea of what you are fitting yourself for; you commence to fit yourself more thoroughly, and have time in which to summons your full courage and energy for the task before you.

Do you not know a man in your town who has a bounteously yielding farm with a good house and barns upon it? Does not this farmer seem to have everything he needs, and does not all he is concerned in seem to prosper? And can you not think of five other farmers living near him who are not so prosperous as he, although they began with just as good advantages?

Is there not a merchant in your town who has a nice large store with everything you ever wish to buy in it? And are there not five other business men who, having every opportunity this one had, are not as successful?

In your village is there not a young man — we will say a lawyer — who struggled along until he learned his profession? Is there not another young man who has established a business of his own? And can you not think of ten others just as good as they, who have no settled occupation, but find work here and there as there is a chance?

I know you must have noticed cases somewhat like these, for they occur everywhere. And they point a moral. Usually — there are exceptions — the one man had a purpose in mind which he strove earnestly to attain, and as a result he now has matters in hand so he can shape them to suit his own convenience. The other five, not having so distinct purposes, were and are governed and hindered more by circumstances.

So if you become more successful than the most of those who are now your schoolmates, it will not necessarily show that your natural endowments are better than theirs, but rather that you made up your mind what you wanted and set yourself to getting it with a will.

There is nothing more important for you to realize than this: That you will make your life just what it turns out to be, whether great or small; that although your parents and teachers may help you, nobody but yourself can make you a true man or woman; that if you ever become noticeable in the world, you will do something sufficient to attract people's attention.

After all, it is no great mystery how some succeed and others fail. This world is governed by law, not chance; and so with all creatures and things in it. Having a goal to run to, we must seek to control circumstances, to call them to our assistance, instead of being whirled here and everywhere by them. If we commence to exercise our forethought in time, perhaps we can make our lives nearly what we would like them to be. We can if we have enough faith, strength and determination. In any event, our lives will be the results of our actions. I believe some writer has said, "We are the creatures of circumstances." This is only true in part: still it must be admitted that a great many people are what circumstances make them. It all depends whether we are content to *drift*, or eager to take hold of the oars and *row*.

In an old arithmetic I studied six or seven years ago there was the rule of Cause and Effect—the same as Proportion in the newer books. Somehow those words "cause and effect" set me to thinking. Only a few days afterwards in reading some books I chanced to come across Emerson's "*Compensation*," which treats somewhat of this same subject. I was delighted; to me the pages turned like revelations. What I had before imperfectly seen became entirely clear. I realized that every act of ours is a cause which produces an effect; that every effect the world has ever experienced had its cause. Now think of this and see if it is not so. You can make its application to your life valuable. It will help make crooked places straight. It will help you understand that your life will be what you *cause* it to be.

As I said at the first of this little talk, I suppose you are ready and anxious to succeed and hold honored positions in life. You do not know what a hard, long task is before you. I don't mean it is impossible, for you are capable of accomplishing a great deal when you really try. You *can* accomplish it; but if you could see all that is implied, as older people see it, for the time your courage would fail and you would count yourself nothing. Suppose for a moment you compare your present abilities with those of the most influential man in your town. Can you ever learn to converse as he does? Can you ever make an address as easily as he does? Can you even muster out the practical business sagacity that he displays?

Bear in mind this: you are nothing. * Whether your father is able to send you to college or set you up in business makes not so much difference. Whether you live in an elegant house or an humble unpainted home is quite immaterial. Everything is before you, and all you ever gain will be accomplished through your own industry and force of mind. When you remember these facts, admit their truth and believe them, you have made a good beginning.

After finding that you are nothing, in your first step to become somebody you may run into the notion that all places are already filled and crowded. Do not be deceived by this old bugbear. Much has already been accomplished, but the greatest achievements, the grandest inducements of this world lie before us. Look forward to the broad vale of the future! as yet it is an

* Several years ago I learned this fact for myself from the writings of J. G. Holland.

unbroken wilderness, but it shall be turned into a goodly land of promise and shall blossom as the rose. Progress is the royal highway leading to the future, and to it you who are now boys and girls will build the cross-roads of improvement on every hand. Work will still continue to be the price of success; success will not be held without it. As the world grows larger its opportunities must expand. Have no fear but the place you wish to fill will be ready. If you do well, the world will need you and be anxious for you.

In this broad field you may strive for the rich probabilities of life, and beyond them its possibilities, fickle and evasive, yet magnificent and grand. You can be a part of this great future! What better can you ask? Do not the very thoughts of it lend you encouragement? Oh, it is grand to be young!

By this time you may demur, "All this is far ahead; there is nothing to do now." Ah! here is the very point I want to emphasize. There is much you can be doing now, much you must be doing now. They are not the large things, far off, but important duties very near you.

There is a time in every man's education when he arrives at the conviction that envy is ignorance; that imitation is suicide; that he must take himself for better, for worse, for his portion; that though the wide universe is full of good, no kernel of nourishing corn can come to him but through his toil bestowed on that plot of ground which is given him to till. The power which resides within him is new in nature, and none but he knows what that is which he can do; nor does he know until he has tried. * * * * Trust thyself; every heart vibrates to that iron string. Accept the place the divine providence has provided for you, the society of your contemporaries, the connection of events. Great men have always done so, and confided themselves childlike to the genius of their age, betraying their perceptions that the absolutely trustworthy was seated at their heart, working through their hands, predominating in all their being.

From Emerson's Self-Reliance.

Think of your work in school. Let your idea be that you go there to *master* something, to understand something, instead of "getting over it" and passing an examination. Get your mind into real, original work; dig deep after the reasons for it and try to see its practical side. Every day learn something that will be of value to you in life.

Here is another thing to do. You can be careful of your appearance. See that you are clean and your clothes tidy and neat. I did not say *new* or *fine* clothes, you notice, but *tidy* and *neat*. If you think you do not know how to appear as well as you ought (and who of us do), observe closely and unobtrusively the ways of well-bred persons and profit as best you may from their example. Learn to walk, to stand, to sit properly, and, my boy, remove your hat from your head the moment you cross any other than a public threshold. Be courteous and obliging, considerate and thoughtful. If you are given to coarse speech or profanity, leave it off. Let everyone see you are trying to be a true gentleman. Before long, if you amount to much in carrying out good resolutions, you will have made a substantial beginning; and people of influence, whose good graces you may well wish to win, will quickly notice your improvement and make note of it. Of course you cannot perfect your manners; you can never do that. But all the while you may be getting nearer to perfection. On the other hand, none of you can long pretend to be ladies and gentlemen when you are not. Your very actions proclaim you what you are; and as others see you, they will judge you.

Easy, timely conversation is a great help in life, and now is the opportune time for you to make a good beginning. Here again you must use your powers of perception and discretion. You already know better than to use the double negative construction, I hope, but you are quite liable to use awkward expressions, or an adjective in place of an adverb and *vice versa*. This brings us right back to what I said a few minutes ago about mastering a study in all its details. When you do find you have been making a mistake, profit by it instead of repeating it. Cultivate a distinct, pleasing tone of voice.

Don't push yourself ahead, as if your foolish inexperienced head contained everything, but notice how older, particularly the best speaking people converse. Try to be interesting and "if at first you do not succeed try, try again." That is one of the secrets of it. Keep trying. The ideas you thus bring out will help your conversation and the conversation will help your ideas. Above all things be sensible and do not go to extremes. And if in time you can develop that peculiar charm, which for want of a better name is called magnetism, so much the luckier are you.

You also need to cultivate your taste for good reading. In these days when printed works are so cheap, you owe it to yourself to form a small library of your own. You must read carefully, not hurriedly, and notice all the little details of what you read. Then you are sure of the larger ones. You need to form original ideas of a book, and should be content only when you think you comprehend it and have got all the good that was in it for you. It is the better way for

you to add but a few books each year, because at your age you cannot use too many wisely.

This course will inform you of affairs, past and present, of the world; it will gain you a more acute mind, widening your thoughts and helping you to a better understanding of human nature; it will help you in conversation, and enable you to mingle with persons of culture. Moreover, books are among the best of companions. They instruct you, they furnish a pastime, a recreation to you, and are a source of joy. Only be sure you read good (I almost said standard) books. It is a loss and a sin to waste your time with others.

In addition to books you should read the newspaper. Read to understand, and in a little while you will find yourself well informed in current events. But let me warn you of one thing—you will come across many occurrences of a sensational nature—murders and all sorts of crime. Read those but little, for they can do you no good. And it shows poor taste in any one to delve in such reading, as many of our self-styled cultured class do.

Among other things you must now cultivate observation. "Men are born as blind as bats or kittens, and it is long before men's eyes are opened; some men never learn to see as long as they live." * There is an old stone wall not far from your home that you may think unsightly and ugly. Yet, should you look it over closely, you would find many kinds of rocks and old, pretty mosses—enough peculiarities to engage your mind a whole day. You must heed the small affairs of life.

* Drummond.

Every great work is made up of little things, and the least of these could hardly be taken away without marring the whole. All noted men have given great attention to small details—what lesser men call trifles—and preserved accuracy and method in meeting the same. Think not that because but little of them is said that small things are unessential. They are so important that you cannot be successful if unmindful of them.

Now these matters of which I have been talking all have an influence in building character. Instead of saying what I have I could have said at first, “Commence to build strong character.” But the word is so big and means so much I thought you would not comprehend it. Please keep the word in mind—*character*.

Your energy, your determination, your foresight, your steadfastness and honesty all help determine your character. What would your energy profit you without determination?—what would your determination lead to without foresight?—what would all other manly attributes amount to if you lacked steadfastness and honesty? Consider these questions.

Already I have hinted as much, but now I wish plainly to say: Commence to do the best you can. Attend to every duty in its season and perform it well. Do your own work. Depend upon no one else more than you must. Be yourself. Let your thoughts ascend to the ideal and higher views of life. *Make the*

How nigh is grandeur to our dust,
How near is God to man!
When Duty whispers low “Thou must,”
The youth replies “I can.”

Emerson.

most of the best in you. But try to get along no faster than you can go thoroughly. Make haste slowly, and your advancement will be surer and more satisfactory to you.

Some people say it is better to be content with an humble life; and not having aimed at so high a mark, there will not be danger of so great a fall. Such persons are sometimes brilliant of mind, but always illogical. If you listen to them, you will begin to take steps in the wrong direction. So long as we are industrious, honest and unselfish, there is little danger in setting too high a purpose. We shall be insignificant enough, even if we do our best. The world needs nothing so much as more fearless, strong and truly useful men and women. Think of this, my dear boys and girls, as you grow older and form character. The years are moving onward!

"For of all the sad words of tongue or pen,
The saddest are these: IT MIGHT HAVE BEEN."

These familiar verses of Whittier are peculiar and deep in their suggestiveness. You do not want to make them yours. Live so that when the sands of life are nearly shifted you can look back and say, "I am satisfied; I have done all as well as I could."

When you are in earnest, you are much more likely to succeed. In the darkest hour lose not your faith and trust. Though the impending cloud looks threatening and dark, you may feel assured that the sunshine is warming the other side of it, and there is no telling when the sun will break through. When your task seems hard, or your success adverse, keep a firm mind, a good heart and go right on developing true

character. Be *persistent*. Here is where many falter and fail; and instead of taking the blame home to themselves, they abuse the world for it. Of this class Hale truly says: "Such men are looking after patrons and letters of recommendation. They think this man was successful because of his uncle's influence and that one because he was a freemason; and they say bitter things of society because society does not help them forward. The truth is all the while, that there is nothing to help, nothing to indorse, nothing to rely upon. The man has failed, but because he has no weight, no steadfastness, no character."

When you are working quietly along and doing your best, do not become dissatisfied or discouraged because you are not promoted so far or esteemed as highly as some other person of your own age. That would argue a weakness in you. Only have confidence in yourself in this stage of *preparation* for future duties, and go right on in your course. All in good time you have the chance to show your capabilities and people will recognize them for what they are worth.

* "At the moment man never understands it. The town cannot understand why Charles, whom it thinks dull moves steadily forward, while George, whom it thought brilliant is more and more steadily set on one side. But the reason is that George is only brilliant, while Charles has the force and weight of character."

Do not for a moment think that thus early you must make much ado and great exploits. Cultivate patience—one of the cardinal virtues—and work. You must make up your mind to watch for your chances

* Edward Everett Hale.

and improve them as they occur. In the words of Ralph Waldo Emerson, the sharpest and shrewdest of American writers, "The world belongs to the energetic man. His will gives him new eyes. He sees expedients and needs where we saw none."

Improve an opportunity and you gain strength by it. Let it pass by and you lose. An opportunity unimproved and gone may never return. It is impossible to formulate words that will guide you safely. If any one thing in life will require your sound judgment and decision of character, it is the question of when and how to act. Many persons of good mental attainments, capable of achieving much honor and worth in the world, jog along in the old customary ruts and leave no useful work behind them. Lacking in the faith and courage required for self-promotion, their superior powers are unrecognized and classed only among the ordinary.

And so with you. Though your mind be filled with good intentions, if you do not carry them out, they can avail you nothing. Again, you may carry your sense of prudence so far that it will lose you many good advantages. When you see an opportunity it is not best to waver and hesitate till it slips away. * "We must not stand shivering on the bank thinking of the cold

* Sydney Smith.

There is a tide in the affairs of men,
Which, taken at its flood, leads on to fortune;
Omitted, all the voyage of their life
Is bound in shallows and in miseries.
On such a full sea we are now afloat;
And we must take the current when it serves,
Or lose our ventures.

Shakespeare.

and danger, but jump in and scramble through as well we may."

You must needs make mistakes one way or the other in matters of this kind, and seeing how you fail, you can profit by them.

I always have a respect for the trustworthy youth who takes care of his dollars, and cents as well, for I think he may become a man with a mind and character of his own. In this spendthrift nation of ours, one of the greatest hinderances to the young is the constant temptation to spend money. It is really surprising to see how much one can get away with in a year without deriving much benefit from it, or knowing where it has gone. Again it would surprise some young people to know how much they could easily save.

You had better learn to think of these matters. Think twice before purchasing every little thing you see, or affording every amusement you wish. I would not have you grasping and stingy more than I would wish you generous to a fault, but be sure that you do not cheat yourself. No one shrewd enough to get along well in a financial sense will cheat himself. And yet—the fact may as well be spoken—shrewdness is not one of the most prominent characteristics of the majority of this world's people.

You no doubt see some of your associates freely spending money that comes easily to them; and you know whether at home, school or college, some have more money than others. Naturally you would like to be as generous and possess as good clothes and furnishings as any. But right here you had better display your force of character, and govern yourself according

to your means. Those with plenteous resources to draw from are really no happier than you, and in the end are not likely to turn out so successfully. You are not thinking merely of the present, but are fitting for usefulness and honor in the future; so be careful now that you do not *unfit* yourself for their attainment. Your life means more than the possible exploits of the present hour, the present day or the present year.

Again, do not get the idea into your unthinking mind that all the luxuries your kind, indulgent parents give you are necessities and you cannot get along without them, because if you do, sometime in the future it may become a source of annoyance. Your station is likely to change. The time will come when you will depend upon someone else than your father for what you spend, and perhaps you cannot well afford more than life's real necessities. If any period of your life comes to that, the faculty of self-denial will be a comfort to you. Economy, like most good things, can be carried too far; but to the young true economy is golden.

For the last half hour, as I have been writing, lines from Longfellow's "*Builders*" have been coursing through my mind:

"All are architects of Fate,"

an idea pretty enough in itself, but vexatious when one is thinking of something else; so I check it, but in a moment comes the next verse.

"Working in these walls of Time."

Well, I wish you to read that poem again. It is a beautiful little poem, one of the very best of Longfellow's shorter pieces. You would be repaid for tak-

ing it as a study. It is nicely builded itself. It emphasizes the idea of building worthy character; it points the importance of small things; it hints the magnificence of great things; it shows that we are building for a long, long time.

We must not forget this. One of nature's laws is that a force once set in motion never dies; it may change from one form to another, but perish never. So with our influence; the structures which we build will influence someone else, and that one will influence another, so that our good works may live on forever. So with our souls — the parts that think and govern all our actions; we should try to make them noble and worthy, for they were not made to die. When they leave their houses of clay we do not know what changes they will undergo. We must wait and see. Meanwhile,

"Let us do our work as well,
Both the unseen and the seen;
Make the house where God may dwell,
Beautiful, entire and clean."



A TALK ABOUT SCHOOL LIFE.

He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city.

Therefore get wisdom; and with all thy getting get understanding.

Book of Proverbs.

In the lexicon of youth, which fate reserves
For a bright manhood, there is no such word
As — *fail*.

Bulwer-Lytton.

I CAN imagine just how you appear in school, what you do and how you feel. It has not been a long time since I was a scholar and did about as you do now. Not many of you know it, but you are now living the happiest years of your lives. As I think of you and my own school days, I cannot but say with Lord Byron,

Ah! happy years! once more, who would not be a boy?

Now I wonder how many of you are thoughtful about your school life—about your duty to yourselves, your parents and your teachers. Some boys and girls are not. I have had enough experience with you to form an idea of how nicely you can do and how much you can accomplish when you are anxious to do your best. Then again I know how silly and prejudiced you may become over a very small matter. Now I will promise you that I will speak shortly, but you may be look-

ing for a little good advice from a teacher's standpoint this evening.

In the last chapter I said very plainly that you go to school to fit yourself for life's work, and of course you will remember that.

The next step to understand distinctly is that you must be yourself. You must not ask your teacher to help you until you have exhausted every effort of your own. She is to assist you when assistance is necessary, but you must do for yourself far more than she can do for you. So, when instead of telling you all about the hard question, as you asked her to do, she tells you to try it again, do not close your book and say you will not try, but think it all over again as if you meant to solve it. You want to understand subjects as you go over them, and the hardest places in your lessons are often the very parts that will help you most. You will frequently come to hard places all through life, and it is best not to get frightened at them. Do not be content until you understand your school work thoroughly, and have a clear idea of *why* you are attempting to understand it.

Now look at the other side a moment. In your own school quite likely you know a boy—I hope he is not you—who if allowed to do it, after trying a hard question once and failing, will raise his hand for the teacher to help him. You can easily see how that boy is losing what little strength he possesses. Possibly he thinks he is cheating his teacher when he is only cheating himself; or it may be he is lazy; or not really lazy, but he has never yet learned the pleasure that comes from real work. However, there is danger that he will develop

more ingenuity in asking questions than in anything else. He is troublesome to his teacher; and his own work is apt to grow worse and worse, just like Rip Van Winkle's farm. This is one way of neglecting opportunity.

Did you ever stop to think why the teacher "keeps order" in school? Well, if you will not get angry—and I guess you will not—I will tell you. Every year your parents spend many dollars to provide you a school. You yourselves do not know enough to appreciate your advantages, so the teacher is compelled to enforce order that you may profit by the privileges given you. Is it not so? After all, older people hardly expect you to be perfect, but I think some of you ought to behave better and appreciate your school and teacher more than you do. You see it is all for *your* good. Discipline and restraint of a kind are necessary for your welfare. There is a fitting place for almost everything. There is a time for work and study; there is a time for laughter and play.

Did you ever try to govern yourselves in school and conduct yourselves so properly that the teacher would seldom have to speak a correcting word? Some scholars do, and I have suspected those are the ones who can control themselves about as they choose all through life.

Always be civil and courteous to your teacher. She works hard for you. Show her that you appreciate her efforts in your behalf. At Christmas it would be a nice plan to make her a little present, if such is not already your custom. A good book is always acceptable to a teacher. There are reasons why she would

not wish an expensive gift, such a one as a few cents from each one of you would procure would be better. The good feeling which prompted the present is what the teacher would value most, not the intrinsic worth. You see a small present would convey your kind regards, doing your teacher good, and you, too.

Let your mind be pleasant and lovable; and your conduct towards others as you would wish theirs towards you. Thus you will help make yourselves and others happy, just as cross or sordid youths make themselves uncomfortable and unlikeable.

Something may occur about which you think the teacher did not do quite right; and so you get a silly prejudice against her and act as badly as you can: so in trying to spite her you harm yourself. Is that right? Are you quite sure that you are not ashamed of it? It does not make any great difference to her. Probably she does not pretend to be perfect. I am not acquainted with a school teacher who does. Everybody makes mistakes. The teacher may make one. But about this matter, if you could only see it in its true light, she is right and you are wrong. And supposing you do not like her as well as you like someone else, that is no reason why you should not be kind to her and do your best. You need to attend to your own faults first. Firmness is a valuable element in one's character, but don't be a stubborn fool.

Our State superintendent, Mr. Stetson, has visited a great many schools in different sections of Maine; and prompted to do something towards correcting some of the most common faults, he put all the directive ideas he could into eight simple, short sentences. They

are addressed to you, and if you will try to follow them out, patiently and persistently, until you unconsciously act according to them, you will have made a great improvement in both appearance and mind. These are the sentences :

1. Stand and sit erect.
2. Move promptly and quietly.
3. Speak distinctly and gently.
4. Study more than text-books.
5. Master what you study.
6. Be courteous and thoughtful.
7. Be dilligent and trustworthy.
8. Make the most of the best in you.

How many of you stand and sit properly? If you do not know the correct positions, ask your teacher by all means.

How many of you move quietly and promptly? Not nearly all of you, if the Maine schools which I have seen are fair samples. Can you not improve in this respect?

How many of you speak distinctly and gently? I should say about as many as move quietly and promptly.

How many of you study more than text-books? Perhaps about the same number that will keep their eyes open for opportunities of promotion in after life. Think of it.

How many of you master what you study? Well, how many? each one, do you?

How many are courteous and thoughtful? Certainly those whom teachers at heart like best.

How many of you are willing to begin now to be dilligent and trustworthy? How many are going to

try to make the most of the best in them? All of you, I truly hope, and may you have strength and determination to make you successful!

Moreover, do not leave your good resolutions at school. Take them home with you, for they are equally valuable in home-life. Try to live up to them at all times, in all places.

In school and home you are now forming habits, good or bad, that will stay with you and powerfully move you towards success or failure. Now, in your youth, you can industriously pick up tiny, sparkling golden sands of character, until they become as a nugget of solid gold. People do not know the possibilities which are wrapped within you. Bring them out, look to the future; and in due time your course will become plain; the tangles will clear away.

I will end as I commenced. In school *are you doing your best?*



A TALK ABOUT HEALTH.

Better than grandeur, better than gold,
Than rank and titles, a hundredfold,
Is a healthy body, and a mind at ease,
And simple pleasures that always please.

Anon.

A man's habits of sleep, of exercise and of appetite; his methods of reasoning, imagination, memory, his faith, his hope, his love — are all blended together in his character.

Hale.

THERE is another very important matter about which I wish to speak. That is your health. Though you have ever so brilliant a mind and courage and decision of character to support it, yet these qualities can avail you but little unless you possess requisite strength; for the body is the foundation in which are imbedded those finer, but not more essential gems, and if its vigor is impaired, there must be detraction from the mental energy as well.

Now you certainly wish to accomplish all you can while in this world, to stay in it as long as you can and live happily all the time. You wish to retain your youthful complexion, your graceful form, and to increase your beauty and intellectual attainments until you have attained middle age, at least. We all want to do this.

But the truth is that most of us in one way or another

er abuse our bodies a great deal. And if you are not an exception among youths, by thinking of it a little, you will see the truth of the statement. Perhaps you need only look back over what you learned in your physiology the last term of school, and then realize how differently you live, to see the wrong you do yourself. I know you are thoughtless of this now—do not quite see the necessity of this little lecture, as some of my scholars call it—because in youth you are quite apt to enjoy good health. But you can always retain your good health and I wish you to do it. Suppose you think of some of the middle-aged people of your acquaintance: is not one troubled much with dyspepsia, another tormented by rheumatism, etc.? Do you not know someone whose brow, thirty years too early, is creased with wrinkles, as the result of nervousness, or imaginary care, instead of real work? Still, every physical infirmity has its cause, else it could not exist; and more and more people are learning to suspect that the only reason why young people as a rule possess better health than their elders, is because they have not had so long a time to impose foolish hardships upon their bodily strength.

Anyone cannot fully realize what a blessing good health is until after it has gone. The human body is like a very intricate machine, “fearfully and wonderfully made;” and if sustained by proper care, is capable of long endurance; but like any other machine, if misused, it is liable to give out the sooner. Were all people mindful and careful of these facts they would be better fitted to perform their duties, and the life average would be longer.

I am sure you are old enough and, I hope, wise enough to consider this matter of health, giving it the attention it so much deserves. The best educated, most intelligent people clearly realize its importance. At the start you must pause long enough to appreciate the laws of cause and effect, to learn the laws of health and resolve to live up to them. You can find these rules in your physiology, as I have no space nor time to tell you what they all are. I am going to give you some easy, sensible suggestions concerning a few of the most broken and most important ones.

If you are like some boys and girls with whom I am acquainted, and were I in your place, I should leave off lurching. It is a needless, harmful habit. I could tell you a little from experience if I chose, but probably it would do no good. I have just been reading on this subject in a hygiene written by a gentleman—a physician, by the way,—who has stood very high as a chemist in the government's service at Washington. You may think he exaggerated the matter a little, but we who have no means of knowing cannot dispute him. The following extract is worth your consideration :

“The practice of eating ‘pieces’ (lunches) between meals is a most pernicious habit, and one that is the prolific cause to which can be traced the ruin of so many constitutions, even in childhood. When food is taken, a full meal should be made, and the stomach should then be permitted to digest it without disturbance. But if fresh portions be introduced when the stomach has half finished its work, the result is that neither portion is properly digested; for the process is

thereby prolonged, the stomach is kept at constant labor, and its powers are so enfeebled and exhausted that it fails to provide the means of nutrition sufficient to supply the demands of the system.

Loss of appetite and general debility ensue, followed by a train of nervous derangements that disturb all the vital functions. Half of the ruined constitutions that are not traceable to alcohol and tobacco may safely be referred to this practice of eating between meals." *

And I should eat more of the plainer kinds of food and less of sweet-cakes and pies and that line of cookery. I should leave off tea and coffee altogether and indulge but sparingly in candies, eating no more of them than I could well help, and those near meals. You would not like to do all this, would you? But by so doing you would feel stronger and more vivacious, your appetite would be so keen that you would be glad when dinner came, and in three or four months you would prefer this healthful fare to all the sweet things you ever ate, for the sufficient reason that you would get along better without them than with them. Moreover, you would have no strong, almost irresistible desire to lunch, nor would you ever wish to go to school without eating a good breakfast. You would simply receive a natural benefit by following nature's plan.

You cannot afford to do without exercise. It is necessary to promote healthy bodily action, thereby increasing your strength. Up to the age of fifteen or sixteen years, you are likely to get a fair amount of exercise which goes a long way in developing your physical self. But sometimes older pupils, and I pre-

* Brown's *"Elements of Physiology and Hygiene."*

sume those no longer pupils, overtax their powers; and overwork, coup'd with lack of open air exercise, is sure to leave its injurious effects.

Therefore be sure to exercise enough. It is best when taken regularly in plenteous, pure air. Be careful never to make it too violent or carry it to over-exertion. Stop before getting fatigued, lest you do yourself more harm than good.

Walking and rowing are forms of exercise often recommended, and in these days bicycle riding must be added to appease those who can afford a wheel. In doing any of the above, if you place any value upon a graceful, erect form, you must take a care in maintaining correct positions.

Gymnastic training, when given by a capable instructor, can be made to answer almost every requirement and to remedy many physical imperfections. Weak lungs, or a weak heart can be strengthened by intelligent movements, just as they can be further weakened by unsuitable exercise.

Would you like to make a beginning along this line? If you do not already take calisthenics in your school, if you make the request, perhaps your teacher will think up a course that will rouse your energies sleepy afternoons.

During all exercise it is essential that you wear loose-fitting clothing. And this leads me to say what I would have otherwise hardly dared to mention. You are now old enough to have your own ideas of taste, and you certainly have more or less to say about the selection of your wearing apparel. You do wisely when you adapt your clothing to health, comfort and beauty;

nor is this difficult to effect, judging from some of the beautiful dresses we see. I want to tell our country girls — young ladies than whom none are more beautiful and intellectual — that to the minds of the better class of men, young and old, those slender, constricted waists we sometimes notice, suggest the idea of self-imposed *deformity*, instead of beauty. Indeed, it is difficult to imagine where the idea of beauty or improvement of the natural form comes in. And if young ladies must follow this fashion, it is as well, and withal, a great deal better not to go to extremes. The body needs room in which to expand. It is more than passing strange that in this era of general intelligence, even for the sake of gaining the imaginary beauty of a half-imaginary fashion, any one could desire to distort the human form to such an extent as to really interfere with some of the most important functions of a perfect physique.

It will repay you many times over to keep your sleeping rooms well aired, and just so far as you can, keep the fresh air circulating through your living rooms.

The daily bath is one of the prime promoters of perfect health. You cannot overestimate the satisfaction derived from a constant sense of personal cleanliness.

Again, do not let anything hinder you from taking enough rest and sleep. I know the joys and duties of life are so many that you are sometimes prone to cheat yourself of required sleep. Don't do it. It is a mistake. Your pastimes have become too many. You are liable, before the end, to plunge yourself into a condition in which a few hours of refreshing sleep

would be more gratifying to you than half the pleasures you ever enjoyed, or half the extra work you ever did.

You ought to take good care of your teeth. Probably you do, but all girls and boys do not. I should hardly have spoken of it at all, had I not noticed how many neglect the matter, and somebody ought to tell them. Brush the teeth twice a day with a soft brush. Use water slightly warmed and no kind of tooth powder nor preparation, unless sanctioned by a reliable dentist. Thus you will not only do yourself a good deed in preserving your teeth, but will stand a little higher in your own estimation, and some people, at least, will think better of you.

When you live according to hygienic principles and your head becomes dull or aches, the trouble may be with your eyes. If they are irritated, or the whites become inflamed, or "red," as we say, such is especially liable to be the case, and you ought to have them examined by a competent optician. Not for the sake of avoiding a little inconvenience, or saving a few dollars, or the greater cross of "wearing glasses" can you afford to neglect so important a matter. In any event take the best possible care of your eyes. When working or studying, instead of facing the source of light, take a position so that the light will fall over one shoulder — most authorities say the left shoulder. For evening work you need a shaded student's lamp giving a soft, steady light, and in addition to this wear a green shade or visor over your forehead. You can purchase one at trifling cost.

If you spend a large part of your time in reading the exciting, worthless literature of the day — what is

termed *trash* — you cannot retain a healthy body or a pure mind. That is a fact, which is too often demonstrated. How can any of our boys and girls wish to waste their time and dissipate their physical and mental strength by perusing *trash*?

You and I have seen the youngster of thirteen years puffing at the lighted cigar. What a self-important, big-feeling lad he is! How smart in speech and action! Poor boy! although I lose all patience with him, yet I cannot but pity him. He is lacking in the right kind of self-respect. He is making a serious mistake. Nor is he the boy that will be wanted a few years hence to fill some nice position of trust. Like the arms of an octopus, there is an unsuspected power fastening itself about him, that is steadily drawing him to earthly ruin. Henceforth his associations will tend towards the coarse and worthless, and in the end, unless he shall be a brand caught from the burning, he will form one of that great class — the unrespected poor.

We are not unmindful that older boys take up the use of tobacco, and for this there seems no good excuse. The evils of this nasty weed are better known now than when your father came under its spell. Tobacco contains a powerful poison which enters the physical systems of its users. Those possessing bodily constitutions strong enough throw most of the poison off. With others it can only irritate and injure the body, and it is confessedly the cause of many deaths every year. Moreover, its effects are not unfrequently transmitted from parent to child; and it is sadly true that many youths who never used tobacco

in any form possess physical powers that have been enfeebled by it. The evils of tobacco are so far-reaching and its use so universal that we cannot get any reliable idea of the hurt it is doing to humanity.

The body and breath of the victim of this filthy habit are so pervaded with tobacco that they cannot be otherwise than offensive to any one at all particular about personal cleanliness. What the pleasure derived from tobacco is, I am proud to say I do not know; but whatever it is, I do not believe it equal to the sense of personal purity enjoyed by those who do without it.

My dear boy, if you wish to keep pure and healthy and strong, have nothing to do with tobacco in any shape or form. Though others do use it, you will show your strength and superior character by letting it entirely alone. Taste it not, even to please your friends. You owe your first duty to yourself. "If success in life be an aim worth striving for, it is surely unwise to shackle one's self with a habit which cannot promote it and may seriously jeopardize it." *

* Martin's *Human Body*.

The following figures are instructive:

Muihall estimates the number of years of intemperance required to produce death as follows:

CLASS.	LIQUORS.
Women.....14	Beer.....22
Gentlemen.....15	Spirits.....17
Working Class.....18	Mixed.....16

The percentage of insanity cases traceable to drink is as follows: Italy, 12 per cent.; France, 21 per cent.; United States, 26 per cent.; Scotland, 28 per cent.

It is stated that there are as many drunkards in the world as there are people in London. What an immense, untold amount of suffering is produced by alcohol! What a wicked waste of energy and strength!

Alcoholic liquors are swifter in their work than tobacco, but there are people who question if they do more harm. The only sensible course is to let such worthless stuffs alone. Death and ill-health are in them all. Usually the moderate drinker becomes an inveterate toper, and not infrequently social and financial ruin follows. The whole story has been often told, and as you are youth of character, willing and determined to succeed, I deem it unnecessary to say more.

There is an old man in England, known and honored throughout the whole wide world. None are there but gladly pay him reverence. His wondrous genius and industry have given him a pre-eminent place among men. Thrice he has been elected to the premiership of England; and for many long years he has stood like a rock, while the political breakers of the great nation have beat and surged against him. And now at the extreme old age of eighty-six years he retains his old-time vim, and works scarcely less than before. Still he is called the Grand Old Man. Such is Mr. Gladstone, called by Henry Ward Beecher the greatest of all living men. His wondrous strength and activity have been subjects of comment over and over again. Certainly there was given to him a natural constitution such as is not given to most men. But of this fact I would have you take note: Early in life he saw the advantage of living up to hygienic laws. This, as well as he could, throughout his whole life he has done, and to this he himself attributes his remarkable retention of strength.

My dear boy or girl, I wish I could use more persuasive words than I have written. Had I not seen so

many who have impaired or ruined the comfort of their lives by carelessness and ignorance I should not place so much stress on a sound body. Everything depends upon your physical strength — success, happiness, determination, disposition, — *everything*.

You are young and just setting out. Commence by shutting sickness out of your life. “Is this possible?” you inquire. Certainly it is. The human body, though complex, is a wonderfully practical working machine. Give it a full chance and it will keep healthy and endure long. It is only on account of the persistent abuse you heap upon yourself that sickness is ever likely to come into your life. You cannot realize the diverse effects of careful living and careless living till after trying both. Do not put off the choice till necessity compels you to make it.

You must learn to be careful, — you who are so young, so strong, so careless, so thoughtless, — you who hope so much of the future. You think you can eat what you will when you will. Sometimes, perhaps, you are a trifle listless, dull for a little while. Nonsense! it’s nothing. You can live just as well without fresh air; it’s a bother to open the doors and windows of your rooms for a little while. What matters it if sometimes the mind does grow dull and the mental fires flag? It’s nothing! You can get along just as well without any special exercise, you who are so strong! It’s often a trouble to seek the open air or to find exercise indoors. Even if the head does ache a little, it’s nothing! Surely you must enjoy every social event in its season. You can lose a little sleep night after night and endure it, too. Don’t you soon

get used to it? You know you do. Oh, it's nothing!

You reason thus. Little seeming trifles make up the grand sum total of your life. You think you can do what you *cannot* do. The inevitable penalty some way, some time, will surely be exacted. Why not choose the better, easier path? Why not plan to be as happy a boy or girl at fifty as you now are at sixteen? Why become one of the "has-beens" before your time? Why not plan to find more delight and a more abiding faith in life after you have passed its zenith than before? Why not retain the vim and elasticity of youth till your sun sets beautifully below the far western hills? Why willfully grind yourself to dust between the upper and nether millstones of life? Why invite disease into your life to write its chapter of misery there?

Perhaps I have already talked too long. I fear I shall weary you. At first, perhaps you may not understand these chapters. Read them again. It will be no easy matter to carry out their directions. It will take all your courage, your determination, your persistence; in a word, your whole *character*. Remember that. But carry them out at any cost, and your endeavors will go a long way towards making you what the world always needs, — a true man or woman. Remember that you are the propelling power of your life and upon yourself you must depend.

Again, I say always do the best you can, retain faith in yourself, and keep a stout heart. Discouragements, seemingly overwhelming may arise, but if you will, you can overcome them all. You may hear the ominous prophecy, gloomy and dark, that troubles *must*

come into your life, and black clouds hang over it. Believe it not. With all its failings this is a beautiful world in which to live. Life is not half so dark as some people would have you suppose. How unhappy the person who is always peering forward anxiously instead of trustingly, who courts fault-finding, who attempts to discern the shadowy forms of woes and tribulations rising, ghost-like, from their unhallowed dens! How old and uncomfortable such a person becomes. Anything but such a disposition!

Let the sunshine in! Though I would see you weightier of mind and purpose than the butterfly is, I would not wish you heavier of heart. Think of the effect of every cause and you can avoid many of the unpleasant things, and to a very considerable extent make your life what you wish it. Do this not, and some day you may pray for that which you thoughtlessly spurned away.

Look to the better side! We must go towards heaven; it is not expected heaven will come all the way to us! If we walk aright, we shall surely grow stronger, our way will surely grow brighter. Expecting to find, we shall find. If we seek the Infinite Source of strength, goodness and happiness though the various dogmas and beliefs be shaken from their innermost foundations, our faith will be secure. Our lives, with ever-increasing momentum, will glide between pleasant hills and green fields, as a majestic flowing river. They will rise and traverse their course even as the sun; not as in the waning days of December, but in the longer days of pleasant June.



A TALK ABOUT PATRIOTISM.

What constitutes a state?

* * * * *

Men who their duties know,
But know their rights, and, knowing, dare maintain.

* * * * *

And sovereign law, that states collected will,
O'er thrones and globes ekure,
Sits empress, crowning good, repressing ill.

Jones.

TODAY is another Saturday. Again the bright, life giving sun has risen. The morning is fresh and clear; the air healthful and exhilarating. The snow sparkles with hoar-frost. Already the boys and girls are coasting down the hillside. Through my window I hear their merry voices and catch glimpses of them as they hurry past. I am glad for them that their lives are so happy; that this Saturday's coasting is so fine. All over our state of Maine this morning, by frozen lake and river, on hillsides and near the sea, thousands of children and youth, bright and joyous, are making the most of this invigorating sport of winter.

Ere they are aware the winter will melt into spring, the spring bloom into summer. The wooded hillsides now so bare will take on a new coat of beautiful foliage and the fields dressed in verdure fresh and green.

The birds will warble their various songs, the insects talk from the starting grass, the waves sparkle and the expanse of ocean soften its cold, icy hue. Nature will continue an inspiration.

No morning could be more opportune than this one in which to make a little talk with you. You have a love for this country of ours. You take a pride in its past romantic, heroic history. You wonder at its brilliant achievements in recent times, and hope to add something thereto. You are devoted to your State of Maine, the present scene of your happy lives; you have an interest in its advancement. And, although you may have never thought of it before, you love the entire country even more. In a common sense, the pines and lakes of Maine, the cypresses and bayous of Louisiana, the plains and rivers of the middle country, the mountains and productive lands of the far West are all yours. They are parts of our vast, magnificent country: and you at heart have no prejudice against any of them, but must ever strive to promote what in your judgment will be best for the whole.

There is something stupendous in the thought of our Republic. Sixty-five millions strong are marching on from day to day. Whither they will, they may go, and no despot or monarch over them to say nay. Leaders we have, but they themselves are led by the people and serve to carry out the peoples' will. Did you ever think of it so before? Can you tell where we are going? Think of it. Read the history of our country again: and as you have opportunity read and think of other nations.

One thing is plain. The country's population is

made up of separate individuals. Therefore, at bottom, the country must rest upon individual character. This has ever been the case the world over. The best, strongest governments have always been sustained by the most intelligent, moral, industrious people. Thus a superior government argues a superior people, an infirm government an infirm people. And *each* individual has his influence, and goes towards forming the whole. Until the nation's citizens degenerate, the nation cannot decay. This is a fact always pertinent, always true. The country needs not greater learning, more brains, nor more brilliant men in Congress as much as more real character, more moral independence, more respect for law. Imbed these truths deep in your lives, dear girls and boys. All people are not honest, are not good, but that is the more reason why you and I must walk in paths of moral rectitude. We must not swerve. Whatever strong greeds, or appetites, or passions we may possess must be subject to the mind, and the baser parts of our minds must yield to our higher parts. Such control bespeaks a strong person, well disposed towards society, and has a helpful power in it. Here is the beginning of real patriotism; the substance of security and peace. And you know not how much our country needs it.

About patriotism I now have but little more to say. Not that the subject is exhausted. Innumerable pages might be written. I wish rather to ask you to read and think for yourselves. The hardships in the wilderness, the Revolutionary struggle, the lives and deeds of great men since all speak for themselves.

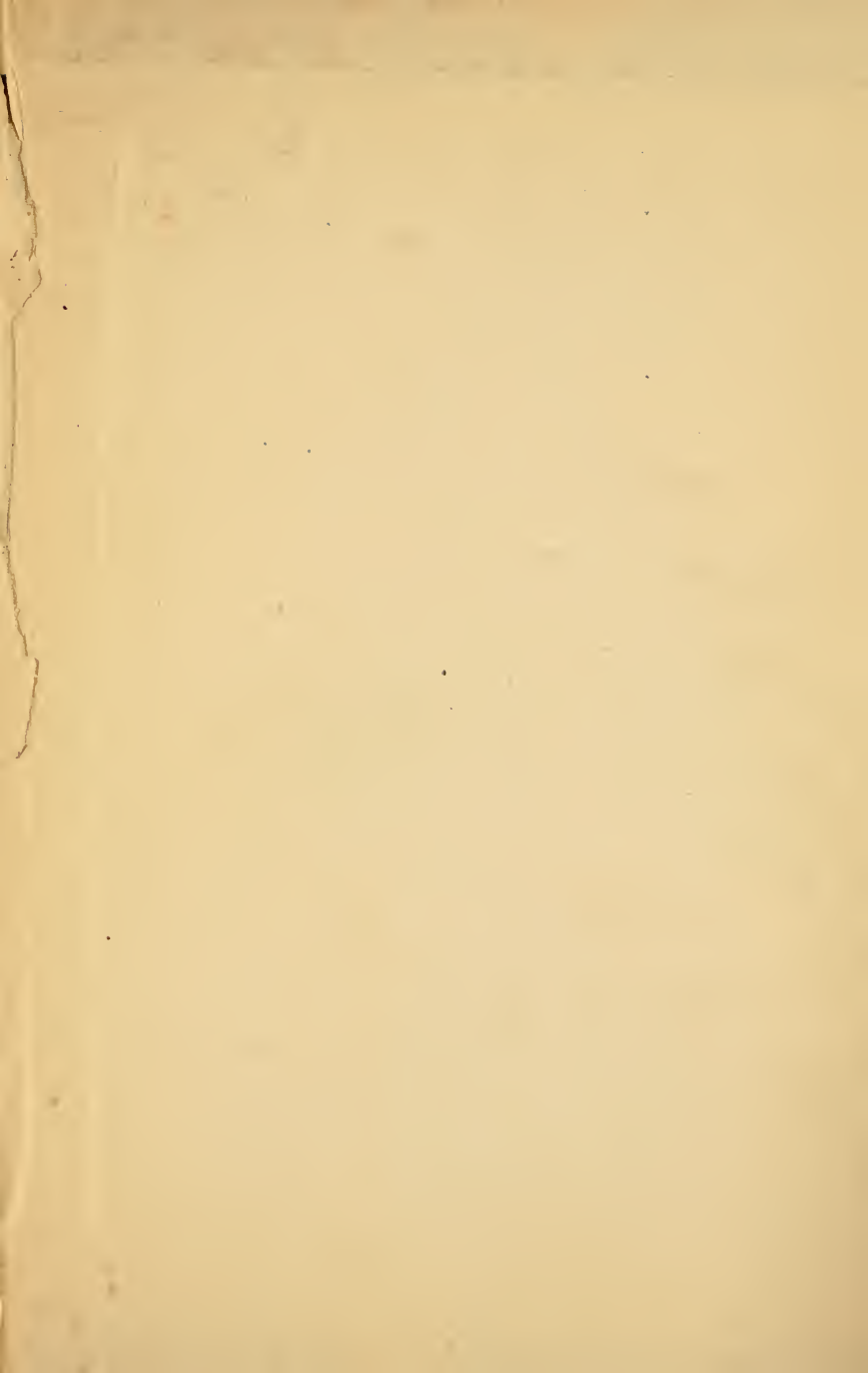
Think of our country. Think of the heroism that

established it, the dangers that have menaced it, the valor that has defended it and you will find your inspiration. Think for yourselves.

I can do no better than close with one simple, grand thought. Thus far we have sustained the nation, and have done what we could to help you. The future will rest with you. For you we are fearful, but in you are builded our brightest, strongest hopes. Strive to be all that you can be and prove yourselves worthy of our hopes.

END.





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